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PART I

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PREFACE

MEDIÆVAL "Hinduism" (to use a convenient, if somewhat vague, term) was, as its successor, modern Indian orthodoxy, is, largely Tāntrik. The Tantra was then, as it is now, the great Mantra and Sādhana[1] Śāstra (Scripture), and the main, where not the sole, source of some of the most fundamental concepts still prevalent as regards worship, images, initiation, yoga, the supremacy of Guru, and so forth. This, however, does not mean that all the injunctions which are to be found in the Śāstra are of universal acceptance, as is pointed out in the Introduction which follows. This Introduction, however, is but a mere sketch of that which I hope to develop in a future volume after the ritual (in its widest sense) has been dealt with in detail. What is, in fact, wanted in this matter is an accurate statement of the facts; whereas up to now such cursory accounts of the Tantra as have appeared are as a rule mere general statements by way of condemnation of it.

One of the earliest of such accounts in English is contained in that interesting though biassed and, in essential respects, ill-understanding work[2] written by W. Ward, and published by the Serampore Mission in 1818. Of this book Horace Hayman Wilson wrote, in his well-known "essays,"[3] that Ward's information was merely oral, and might be regarded as unsatisfactory. It is a fuller account, however, than his own, and contains a certain amount of information which is fairly accurate with some which is not so. The author, however, like so many of his English successors, was influenced by a strong racial and credal bias, which in the old style he quite frankly and honestly displayed to view. With a strong faith in Protestant Christianity he combined exaggerated notions of the universal piety and

[1] That is, ritual, practice. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[2] "A View of the History, Literature, and Mythology of the Hindus." See vol. i, pp. 496-509; vol. ii, pp. xxxviii-xli.

[3] "Essays and Lectures, chiefly on the Religion of the Hindus," Ed. 1862, vol. i, p. 258.

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morals of his own people who professed it.[1] On the other hand, he wrote at a time when, according to his account, Hinduism was at a low ebb, and in its lower forms apparently productive of many evils. Contrasting, as some of his successors have since done, an over-painted picture of Western "Light" with a fictitious or exaggerated Eastern "Darkness," he expressed himself, as some of them have also since done, much perturbed by the fact "that for some time past a very unjust and unhappy impression appeared to have been made in the public mind by encomiums passed on the Hindu writings."[2] He was certainly not himself guilty of the offence he here deplored. For we are told by him that the "Hindu system is the most puerile, impure, and bloody of any system of idolatry that was ever established on earth" amongst "an idle, effeminate, and dissolute people" of "disordered imaginations," who "frequent their temples, not for devotion, but for the satisfaction of their licentious appetites." The result of this alleged general depravity is stated in the extraordinary charge that "a chaste woman faithful to her husband is scarcely to be found in all the millions of Hindus," whose "notions of the evil of sin are so superficial" that "they cannot be expected to promulgate the doctrine" of endless punishment in Hell-fire.[3]

Given these circumstances, we are not surprised to find that he had only eyes for that which he understood to be bad. The good which is to be found in other religions is of no value to the mere controversialist. Thus, given the general brevity of his account, over-lengthy descriptions are set forth of such

[1] Comparing the virtues of his country with the general Indian iniquity, he writes: "Where shall we find piety more elevated or morals correct even among individuals in the lowest orders of society than in our own land?

[2] Ward, vol. ii, p. lxxiv. The author of a quite recent work inspired by the same motive thinks to cure the European mind, "corrupted by theosophical moonings and mystical sentimentalism," by violent and ignorant invective. "Hinduism," he writes, "is the most material and childishly superstitious animalism that has ever masqueraded as idealism." It has no morality, and the absurd object of its worship is "a mixture of Bacchus, Don Juan, and Dick Turpin." It is not a religion at all, but "is a pit of abomination, as far set from God as the mind of man can go"; and so forth. "The Light of India," by Harold Begbie.

[3] Ward, see vol. ii, pp. lxxvii, xlix, xiii, xlii, xxii; vol. i, p. 499.

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matters as how to kill an enemy by making his image in bull's-dung, taking it to a burning-ground, then boiling the flesh of a hawk with spirits in a skull, with invocations to Antaka; charms against snake-bite, and so forth. Ward, like many another who followed him (and I deal with his case as in many respects typical of the others), seems to have thought that the chief and practically the sole subjects of the Tantra were sensual rites and black magic. It does not seem to have occured to either him or them that, apart from its manifold secular contents, the Śāstra is the repository of a high philosophic doctrine, and of the means whereby its truth may through bodily psychic and spiritual development be realized. It is doubtless less easy to understand and describe these matters. The Scripture, however, is misjudged if we look merely to practices to be found therein similar to those contained in Western Crimoires, such as "Le Petit Albert," and other even less reputable works. A cursory glance, it is true, is thrown on higher matters, but with the same result. The lofty doctrines of Yoga, which the author of a quite recent work[1] finds to be, "with its replusive developments" "much the same as Shamanism," was long ago declared by his predecessor to be "absurd, impious, and ridiculous". It is not surprising, therefore, to find that the more disputable theories and ill-famed practices of some of the Tantras are not accurately described, and are indeed misunderstood. Whatever we may think of such doctrines, they are not truly represented by the statement that a certain division of worshippers seek to "blunt the edge of the passions with excessive indulgence."

The later experience of Brian Hodgson, whose valued work in Nepal should be better known, led him to describe the Tantra as "lust, mummery, and black magic."

The work of H. H. Wilson, though stated to be based in part on the texts, is admitted by its author to be necessarily superficial, depending on a cursory inspection of some of the documents.[2] The account of the Tantras occupies but a small part of a description which purports to deal with all the Hindu

[1] "Antiquities of India," by Dr. L. Barnett, p. 17.

[2] Wilson, vol. i, p. 8.

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sects. Of these Scriptures in particular he wrote what is as true now as then, "that they had been little examined by European scholars." He added, however, that such attention as had been paid to them was enough in his opinion to warrant the accusation that "they are authorities for all that is most abominable in the present state of the Hindu religion." [1] His work is also written from the standpoint of one to whom all other systems are "shown to be fallacious and false by the Ithuriel spear of Christian truth," a standpoint which did not permit a countenance of either "devotees of superstition" on the one hand, or the men of learning on the other, "whose toleration," he complained, "is so comprehensive that it amounts to indifference to truth." The Tāntrik ritual in particular is described to be "nonsensical extravagance," at which, he says, he is disposed to laugh. Nyāsas[2] are "absurd gesticulations," and so forth. H. H. Wilson was doubtless a distinguished Orientalist, and his work is in many respects of acknowledged value; but there are matters in his book which, from want of sympathy and knowledge, he wholly failed to understand, not only as regards general Hindu doctrines, but the specific teaching and ritual which is to be found in the Tantra. Nyāsa, for instance, is alleged to be absurd, but it does not appear that he or those who followed him really knew what it was, any more than he understood the nature of Bīja. We learn nothing from his definition "monosyllabic ejaculations of imagined mysterious import" beyond this—that he had nothing else to say. His observation that the Abbé Dubois committed some egregious blunders may be applied to many others who have dealt with Hinduism, including himself. [3] Indeed if we are duly modest, we will all of us be ready to admit the possibility of going astray in what is to us both a difficult and alien subject. Thus he appears to think that the oft-quoted verse commencing with the words, "Pītvā, pītvā, punah

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[1] Wilson, vol. ii, 77.

[2] See as to this form of ritual, *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[3] Wilson, vol. ii, pp. 8, 115, 82, 39, 219, 78; Wilson, vol. i, p. 208.

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pītvā,"[1] is a Tāntrik counsel of drunkenness as a means to secure what we call salvation. Apart from any special knowledge on the point, it might have been reasonably supposed that such an interpretation was absurd. And if it be hardly credible that a celebrated Sanskritist and intelligent man thought otherwise, this only shows that more is required for the understanding of a Hindu Śāstra than linguistic talent, however great. The verse is as little understood as some others (such as *Mātriyonium paritajya viharet sarvvayonishu*") which, in the language of a recent work,[2] are supposed to inculcate "the sacred duty to practise incest."

Since Wilson's time all who have dealt with the Tantras appear to have adopted second-hand the accounts given by him and Ward, but never, so far as I am aware, with the qualifications which Wilson thought in fairness should be added to his adverse judgment. Thus, to take but one instance, we find all authors up to the present time reproducing Wilson's erroneous statement that the Mudrā of the Panchatattva are "mystical gesticulations," when in fact the term means parched cereal food of various kinds. The matter may appear to some a small one, even though accuracy is always important. But it is not the only instance of a repeated error; and how was it possible for those who have discoursed upon the Panchatattva of the Vīrāchāra ritual to have read the texts dealing with it, and not to have learnt what this particular Tattva means?

In the work last cited, and in a review of my Edition of the Mahānirvāna, the opinion is expressed that there is in the body of the Scripture called Tantra a nucleus only of Tāntrik teaching properly so called, which nucleus is defined as "black art of the

[1] "Having drunk, drunk, and again drunk, and having fallen, let him rise again and attain liberation" (vol. i, p. 260). We find apparently the same error in Ward, vol. ii, p. xl. The explanation is too long to be given here. I deal with it elsewhere. It, however, refers to the acsent and descent in the body of Kundalinī Śakti from its basic to its cerebral centre.

[2] "Antiquities of India," by Dr. L. Barnett. The verse does not mean that incest may be committed with any woman save a mother, but that in doing recitation (japa) of the Śakti Mantra count is to be made on all the joints (yoni) of the fingers, except on the two upper joints of the first (index) finger, technically in such case called the Mātriyoni. In the case of japa of the Mantra of a male Devatā, the two lower joints of the middle finger are called Mātriyoni.

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crudest and filthiest kind, with a rough background of the Śiva Śakti cult." Round this nucleus, it is suggested, gathered a varying mass of Vaidik and "Brahminic" ritual, together with a certain "quantum of Upanishadic idealism." "The Tantra" is itself said to be of two kinds. One of such classes is alleged to represent the "unvarnished" Tāntrik teaching above stated. Of Scriptures representing this class it is said that they are not merely "full of silly and vulgar superstition and magic," but have the additional "spice of wickedness and obscenity." It is of them that the author cited says: "The highly coloured Yogic imagination pales beside the doctrines of the infamous Tantras in which a veritable Devil's mass is purveyed in various forms to a swarm of sects, mostly of the Sivaite persuasion." The alleged second class of Tantras are apparently those in which the original wickedness and obscenity has been removed or rendered innocuous, or at least comparatively so, with the result that, according to the author cited, the most that can be said of them is that they are "full of silly and vulgar superstition and magic."

I cannot within the limits of this Preface discuss these strongly worded appreciations. I would, however, like to add this much to what is stated in the Introduction which follows: Allegations as regards "the Tantra"—that is, as regards the whole body of existent Scripture which passes under that name—must be received with caution. There is no European scholar who has read "the Tantra" in this sense even approximately. The reasons for this are obvious. In the first place, a great deal of the Śāstra has disappeared. Of the Tantras which survive, and which are still numerous, some are extremely rare and others are fragmentary. I have myself been endeavouring for some years past to secure MSS. of several Tantras, but without success. A few only have been printed and imperfectly edited, and even these are but little, if at all, known in Europe. The frequently erroneous character of current criticism of the Tantra leads me to suppose that its authors are, generally speaking, second-hand by report, and without a knowledge of the actual texts. If this be in some

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cases not so, then it would seem that only portions of some Tantras have been read, and not infrequently ill-understood. The Tantra, in fact, contains many a technical term and secret doctrine which are not to be understood by the sole aid of a Sanskrit dictionary and grammar. When it is better known, some of the charges which have been made against it will have to be withdrawn. It has hitherto commonly been supposed that this Scripture is the expression in all its parts of all wickedness. The distinction above made, whether correct in itself or not, at least marks an advance[1] towards a more correct appreciation of the Śāstra, even though it renders the same kind of justice as that which is done when a not unintelligent man whom we have hitherto called a knave is charged with being merely a vulgar fool. It must, however, be now obvious that conclusions based on such fragmentary material, and without knowledge of the occult teachings, is without authoritative value. In the present state of our knowledge, generalizations concerning the Tantra are likely in important matters to be hazardous. They seem to me to be particularly valueless when they take the form of mere abuse.

There is another important matter which is to be borne in mind, and which one of my Indian critics thinks that I have myself overlooked in my Edition of the Mahānirvāna. He says that the account I have there given of Tāntrik teaching is vitiated by the erroneous supposition that all the Tāntrik works are complementary to each other, and that I have ignored the distinctions which exist between varying schools and traditions. I was not unaware of the alleged distinctions to which my critic refers, though their existence and nature have yet to be established. I, however, then expressly stated that I did not deal with these subjects, reserving as I did such observations as I had at present to make for this work. A number of questions present themselves for solution upon this difficult matter. What,

[1] Not that it is the first. In more moderate language Sir Monier Williams had already suggested a distinction between the original Tāntrik teaching and its subsequent developments and between the Tantras themselves; adding, however, that little was known on the subject. ("Indian Wisdom," p. 524).

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for instance, are the specific characteristics of the various classes of Āgamas known as Dāmara, Yāmala, Uddīṣa, and Tantra, whether of the so-called Śaiva (such as the Kāmika, Dīpta, Vijaya, etc.); Vaiṣnava (such as the Gandharva, Gautama, Rādhā, Brihadrudrayāmala and others); or the Śākta, Kaula, or Devī type of Tantra? A similar question may be raised as to the sixty-four Tantras of the Three Krāntas respectively. Again, what are the Tantras in force in the present Svetavarāha Kalpa? Again, what is the relation between all these Śāstras as representing the specifically "Indian" Tantra and the "Buddhist" Tantra? Finally, what, if any, are the developments which have taken place as regards these Śāstrik teachings? For Indian thought moves, even though some who write of it from books only think of it as something merely past. As H. H. Wilson says of the Hindu religion generally: "Its internal constitution has not been exempt from those varieties to which all human systems of belief are subject, and it has undergone great and frequent modifications, until it presents an appearance which there is great reason to suppose is very different from that which it originally wore." Lastly, what (and this is my immediate subject) is the Tāntrik doctrine and practice as it is at present understood and followed? When these and a number of other questions of great difficulty are solved, we may permit ourselves a greater dogmatism than our present state of knowledge allows. I am more immediately concerned with another matter — namely, the present beliefs of the Indian peoples. In connection, however, with this purpose, I may here say this: if it is assumed that there are different schools, then Tantras of the same school may obviously be taken as complementary to one another. In respect of other Tantras, even if they do, as alleged, represent varying traditions, it will, I think, be found that there are in any case many common elements accompanying their own alleged distinctive differences which render them complementary to other Tantras to that extent. Take, for instance, the specific Tāntrik Yoga, known as Ṣatcakrabheda, which involves concentration on the lower centres. This is dealt with in Tantras which are alleged to be the expression of

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differing doctrine and practice in other respects. Similar observations may be made as regards the general worship (Upāsana), and so forth.

As the foregoing observations may possibly be misunderstood by some to mean that I think that there is nothing in the Tantra which is likely to provoke dissent, and that nothing has been done in the name, or by followers, of the Śāstra, which is in fact evil, it is necessary for me to say that that is not my opinion, though I think that the Śāstra as a whole has not hitherto been understood—a fate which it has shared with many another Hindu doctrine and practice.

Looking at the matter from a purely objective standpoint, every Orientalist must admit that an accurate knowledge of this Śāstra is of first-rate importance. But apart from this historical view, there are in the Tantra principles and practices which are of value in themselves. There is, for instance, a deep philosophic doctrine and a wonderful ritual which artistically shares with the Buddhist Tantras, though in a different way, the vehement splendour which has aptly been ascribed to the latter; a ritual which is at the same time, when rightly understood, singularly rational and psychologically profound. One of my English critics aptly appreciated this character of the Tāntrik ritual when he said that "from one point of view it is perhaps the most elaborate system of auto-suggestion in the world;"[1] a remark which, as well as the theory of auto-suggestion itself, will have a deeper content for those who are conversant with the Indian doctrine of the Ātman and states of consciousness than for the ordinary English reader. It is necessary, however, that the ritual should be understood, otherwise it will not unlikely appear to be the "nonsensical extravagance" which H. H. Wilson called it. Disdain for "meaningless mystical syllables," "absurd gesticulations," and so forth, is often, after all, nothing but the rather foolish expression of annoyance which is felt at the presence of something not understood. These things, however, are not so senseless as some suppose.

[1] *The Quest*, October, 1913.

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In the next place we have in the Tantra the recognition of the fine principle that this doctrine and its expression in ritual are (subject to their varying competencies) for all, whatever be their race, caste, or sex. This marks a great advance on the parochial restrictions of the Vedas, which are so often placed in favourable opposition to the Tantra by English writers. The Śudra and woman are under none of the Vaidik bans. What, again, can be finer than the high veneration of woman which the Tantra inculcates. The Sufi author of the Dabistan,[1] describing, in the seventeenth century, the Śāktas, speaks of the Mother of the World in the following charmful passage:[2] "This Māyā is the maker of the productions of this world and of its inhabitants, and the Creator of the spirits and of the bodies: the universe and its contents are born from Her: from respect of the said production and of the mentioned effects She is entitled Jagadambā, or Mother of the Universe. Nonentity finds no access to this Creator. The garment of perishableness does not sit right upon the body of this fascinating Empress. The dust of nothingness does not move round the circle of Her dominion. The real beings of heaven and the accidental creatures of the nether world are equally enamoured and intoxicated of desire before Her. Bound by these ties of deceit in this revolving world, whoever rebels feels the desire of Mukti — that is, of emancipation, independence, and happiness; nevertheless, from carelessness, he pays obedience and worship to this world-deceiving Queen, and never abandons the path of adoration of this bewitching Lady who, as the spiritual principle, exists in all living beings in the Six Circles." As women are the earthly incarnations of this great Queen he goes on then to say: "The Āgama (Tantra) favours both sexes equally, and makes no distinction between men and women, for men and women compose equally humankind. This sect holds women in great esteem and calls them Śaktis (powers), and to ill-treat a Śakti—that is, a woman—is held to be a crime." As H. H. Wilson also himself points out,[3] women, as manifestations of the Great

[1] Ed. Shea and Troyer (1843).
[2] Ed. Shea and Troyer (1843) vol. ii, p. 149. [3] "Essays," vol. i, p. 246.

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Cause of all, are entitled to respect and even to veneration. Whoever offends them incurs the wrath of Prakṛti, the Mother of all, whilst he who propitiates them offers worship to Prakṛti Herself.[1]

And so, at a time when, as some allege, in accordance with the Vedas,[2] the rite of Sati was being practised, and many a woman was being horribly oppressed, it was the Mahānirvāna Tantra[3] which forbade it on the grounds above stated. In conformity, also, with these views we find that, according to the Tantra, alone of the great Śāstras, a woman may be a spiritual teacher (Guru), and initiation by her achieves increased benefit. Thus initiation by a mother of her son is eightfold more fruitful than any other. This, some may think, is not without example to us in the West, where, notwithstanding the increasing recognition of the place of woman, her right of spiritual teaching is still denied. There are other matters in the Tantra to which in this connection I might refer, such as true principles of Sādhana on the path of desire, were it not impossible to discuss such a subject shortly except at peril of misunderstanding.

Whatever we may think upon these matters, it will occur to everyone of experience and free from prejudice that there must be more in a Śāstra which has obtained so great a credence and wide-spreading authority than the moral abuses and silly superstitions alone with which it is charged. From the purely objective and detached standpoint of the historical student, the whole of the Śāstra is of value and interest. Historical research in itself is not concerned with moral values. Its subject is whatever man has taught, or said, or done. When we consider, however, these values, the case is, of course, different. From the latter point of view, the Tantra is an encyclopedic amalgam of elements of varying character and worth, extending from the doctrines of a lofty speculation to practices which to the

[1] Even if it be held, as Wilson does, that this doctrine has led with one branch of the sect at least to abuse, the existence of such abuse cannot affect the doctrine itself as above described.

[2] The existence of Vaidik authority is disputed.

[3] See Introduction, *post*.

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higher occultism are suspect,[1] and to prescriptions which may be used for the purposes of evil-intentioned magic. Here, therefore, we must distinguish. In short, we must first inquire and learn what, in fact, the Śāstra is, and then understand and discriminate.

Up to the present, however, want of knowledge is responsible for an indiscriminating condemnation of the whole of an extensive literature, the cultural expression of the varied activities of a secular epoch. It is sufficient at present for practical purposes to say that (apart from magic) the ritual in the Śāstra to which objection has been taken forms but one portion of the Scripture properly applicable to a select class of adepts, and that the remainder of its provisions deal with matters which are free from exception on the grounds on which the Tantra has been adversely criticized. It is unnecessary here to further develop a proposition of which the book now translated is itself the proof.

I had at first intended merely to draw upon the author's work and other sources for the purpose of a presentation in Western form of some of the fundamental principles of a Śāstra which has been hitherto so little understood. The execution of this intention I defer to some future time, when I hope to deal in my own way with the metaphysical and psychological bases of Hindu worship, a subject, on its practical side, hitherto untouched. For the present, however, I present the subject in the words of an orthodox Hindu, who is an adherent of the Tantra Śāstra, and whose work (Tantratattva) is here translated.[2] For those who might be disposed to accept the correctness of the views expressed by the Authors above cited would not unlikely entertain a suspicion of the genuineness of the Tāntrik character of a work of the present description, if upon a reading they should find it to be neither silly, nor vulgarly

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[1] I have here in mind what is technically called Nil Sādhana, and express myself as I do remembering that some great Sādhakas have practised it. It is noteworthy that both it and Mahāchināchāra (a term in itself full of significance) are the two chief elements in the Indian Tantra which are alleged to be non-Aryan importations.

[2] The work and its author are referred to in the Introduction which follows.

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superstitious, magical, wicked, or obscene. The exposition, therefore, here given is not mine, but the Pandit's.

His work is, however, in no sense complete, but deals in a popular style with some portions only of the subject-matter. After I had written the Introduction which follows, I received a letter from him in which he explains that his book was published over twenty years ago, with a view to combating both the errors of what is called "Reformed" or "Protestant" Hinduism, and the mistakes of some incompetent defenders of orthodoxy; and that therefore both the matter and form of his work were determined by the arguments of those whom he controverted. As a result, his reply, which is presented in a somewhat discursive manner, does not treat of some subjects with which he desired to deal. He writes, therefore, to me to say that he has in preparation a third part, in which he proposes to give an exposition of the philosophy of the Tantra. The two Parts, now published, treat of (to use our parlance) the religious side of *certain portions* of the subject, though in India philosophy and religion are mingled in a way which the West has not known since the age when philosophy was held to be Ancilla Theologiæ. This third Part, when ready, I hope to publish in continuation of the volume now issued.

Further, there are certain matters of doctrine and practice which are, as the Author states, for the initiate alone, and of which, therefore, he treats either cursorily or not at all. What, however, he does say will effect more than a mere acquittal of his system of the wholesale charges of absurdity and vice so commonly made against it. Referring to what is blameworthy, the Pandit himself says: "We know that there are reasons for saying some hard things"; though he adds: "But how are Kālī or Śiva or Tantra to blame?" As regards the likelihood of abuse in any system, there is more to be said for the Hindu view of the naturally crooked influence of time than for the notion of "progress" from moment to moment which some of us in the West would would seem to entertain. But for all that, it would indeed be a phenomenon of strange degeneracy if India, which has thought the deepest thoughts of the world, and which

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has been marked by the intensity of its religious feelings, should, even in its most unfortunate days, have produced a system of extensive influence and authority which is intellectually nothing but "brainless hocus-pocus," and morally a mere facile reversal of the high notions of Dharma,[1] which have distinguished its peoples beyond all the races. As a matter of fact, and to my knowledge, even at the present day some of the most learned Pandits and the greatest Sādhakas esteem and follow this Scripture, which they regard as the treasure of their heart. How comes this to be if it is merely, as alleged, the debased product of the Hindu spirit "at its lowest and very worst"? Whether particular portions of its teachings or practice should be generally approved is another matter. The difficulties, however, which attend an exposition of even such parts of the Śāstra as seem to be at first view readily exposed to attack are such that those who have any real knowledge concerning them will be the first to abstain from hasty generalizations, particularly when they take the form of mere abuse.

As regards such portions of doctrine as are here exposed, the Author in the course of the defence of his own beliefs has in many an instance severely castigated his opponents for their inaccurate statements and loose thinking. For reasons, however, which I give in the Introduction which follows, views more favourable to the Author's position now more generally prevail in India than was the case when his work was first written. Many even of those who nowadays are not prepared to accept orthodox doctrine in its entirety are yet disposed to think that the beliefs of their fathers were not, after all, quite so foolish as under the first influences of the English "Illumination" they considered them to be. But this change of view is not peculiar to India only. We ourselves have also recently experienced something of the same kind. An intelligent understanding of Christian ideas and Catholic ritual has dispelled many a shallow criticism to which they have been subjected by a narrow sectarianism on the one hand, and an equally narrow "rationalism"

[1] Religion, duty, etc. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

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on the other. By this, however, it is not meant that no adverse criticisms in either of these matters have had force, or that in some Indian quarters the Śāstra is not still regarded as (to use the words of an Indian writer) "mines of superstition."

Though the Pandit's work is issued in two parts, I have, for the benefit of the readers of the first volume, given the table of contents of the second part now in the press, which will be ready for publication this year. This will be preceded by an Introductory essay from the pen of Sj. Barada Kanta Majumdār.

Later I hope to make up for the deficiencies in the present work by others dealing with the ritual in greater detail. Thus the Pandit in the second part refers to, but does not treat of, the Tāntrik yoga process, known as Ṣatcakrabheda. This I have dealt with in the work now in the press,[1] entitled "The Six Centres and the Serpent Force," being a translation from the Sanskrit, with Introduction, commentary, and plates of the Ṣatcakranirūpana of Purnānanda Svāmī, the Sanskrit treatise itself forming part of the extensive Śrītattvacintāmaṇi, which is also being prepared for publication in the series of "Tāntrik Texts."

The references to the "Introduction" are to the Introduction of my Edition of the Mahānirvāna Tantra.[2] References to "Introduction, *ante*," are to the Introduction which follows this Preface.

BENARES
DECEMBER 28, 1913 *Arthur Avalon*

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[1] Publishers' Note: Since published under the title "Serpent Power" Seventh Edition.

[2] Publishers' Note: Now published as a separate volume entitled "Introduction to Tantra Śāstra."

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INTRODUCTION

THIS work, by an Indian Pandit, is a presentment, the first of its kind, of the principles of that development of the Vaidika Karmakāṇda which, under the name of the Tantra Śāstra, is the scripture (Śāstra) of the Kali age. This Śāstra, together with its accompanying oral tradition, is the voluminious source of the greater part of the Hindu ritual, Hathayoga, and the various forms of spiritual training which pass under the generic term "Sādhana." In fact, both popular and esoteric Hinduism is, in its practical aspects, largely Tāntrik.

Recently an increased interest has been shown in the Hindu beliefs. Hitherto, however, attention has been chiefly directed to those great Vedāntik principles, which, subsumed, to a greater or less degree, in the beliefs and practices of all the Hindu sects are yet, in their conscious realization, the very end only of the highest spiritual effort. Little has been done to present the practical application of those principles in the particular form which they assume in the various divisions, methods, and rituals of the Indian worshippers. This side of practice, though neglected, has both intrinsic value and helps to a clearer and deeper understanding of the general principles than can be gathered from any bare theoretical statement of them. Ritual and spiritual exercise are objectively considered their pictorial statement, as they are subjectively the effective means of their realization. The knowledge of hymn, and legend, of worship and sādhana, will alone give that full knowledge of the Hindu spirit without which its religious and philosophical conceptions are likely to be but poorly understood. The present development of upāsana (worship) and sādhana can only be learnt from the Tantra, which is the Mantra and Sādhana Śāstra and its accompanying oral traditions.

Some years ago, Professor Cowell wrote, "the Tantras form a branch of literature highly esteemed, though at present much neglected"; yet, as Professor Sir Monier Williams[1] has

[1] "Indian Wisdom," p. 522 *et seq.*

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more recently pointed out, none of the numerous Tantras had, when he wrote,[1] been printed in Europe or investigated or translated by its Orientalists.

The account, which the work last cited gives of them, itself affords, by its meagre character and inaccuracies, evidence of the lack of information on the subject of which its author speaks. Thus the mudrā of the Panchatattva does not, as there stated, mean "mystical gestures," but, in the case of the rājasika and tāmasika panchatattva, parched cereal of various kinds as defined by the Yoginī Tantra.[2] In the sāttvika sādhana it has another and esoteric meaning,[3] equally dissimilar from the sense of the term "mudrā" as that word is employed in ordinary upāsana and hathayoga. "Nigama" is not the name of a "sacred book appealed to by Dakshināchārins" as opposed to "Āgama," but is that form of Tantra in which the Devī is guru instead of śiṣya, as opposed to "Āgama," in which the Devī is śiṣya and Śiva is guru.[4] It follows, therefore, that Āgama does not mean "a sacred book appealed to by Vāmāchārins" as opposed to Nigama of the followers of Dakshināchāra. Nor is the term Vāmāchārin itself a synonym for Kaula, for a person may be the first without being the second.[5] The Mahānirvāna Tantra is not the only Tantra "attributed to Śiva," but all

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[1] I have since published an English translation of the current Sanskrit version of the Mahānirvāna Tantra entitled "The Great Liberation," and have in preparation a translation of the Kulārnava.

[2] Chap. vi:

Bhrishtadānyādikang yad yad charvaniyang prachakshate,
Sā mudrā kathitā devi sarveshāng naganandini.

The same and other errors occur in Encyc. Brit., xiii, pp. 511-512.

[3] See Āgamasāra; Kaivalya Tantra, and the Tantra *passim*, and *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[4] See the Āgamādvaitanirnaya, cited *post*. On the contrary, the Nigamas are said to be Pūrnarahasya. Āgama and Nigama are also applied to the Veda, but Āgama as applied to the Tantra has the above signification, though, as Professor Whitney says, it etymologically means "that which has come down" (Century Dictionary and Cyclopaedia, vol. ix, p. 978).

[5] The Kaula is a member of the highest of the several divisions of worshippers (Āchāra), of which Vāmāchāra is one. It is only after a Sādhaka has fulfilled all preceding Dharmas that he is qualified for Kauladharma.

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Śāstra so called has Him as its Revealer and Ganeśa as its scribe.[1] The Śāradātilaka and Mantramahodadhi are not Tantras, but Tāntrik compendia and commentaries. The Tāntrik rite called Bhūtaśuddhi does not mean "removal of demons."[2] but the purification of the elements (earth, air, fire, etc., and the tattvas of which they are derivatives) in the body of the sādhaka, and so forth.

As might be expected, errors abound in accounts given by authors claiming less expert competence, whether European or Indian. Thus an Indian writer[3] explains the Mudrā of the Panchatattva to be "gold or coins." It is true that "coin" is one of the meanings of the term "Mudrā," but even in the absence of special information it might have reasonably been surmised that "Tāntriks" do not worship with a gold mohur or rupee. Nor is the Śakti, which is by these and other rites worshipped, material force, as was supposed by the founder of the Bhāratavarshīya Brāhmasamāj, who wrote some years ago of the European materialists of his day as "Śāktas offering dry homage to force victorious over the European Bhaktas, worshippers of the God of Love."[4] Nor is it the fact "that Śāktas divide themselves into the Dakshina and Vāma classes according to whether they attach the greater importance to the male or to the female principle respectively"[5] and so forth. Misconception of the teaching of Tantra, together with abuses committed by one of the communities of Tāntrik worshippers,

[1] See Gāyatri Tantra, chap. I. Professor Whitney (*loc. cit.*) says that their authorship is sometimes ascribed to Dattātreya. Of this I have never heard, and if such ascription is made it is incorrect. There is a work dealing with Indrajāla Vidyā called the Dattātreya Tantra, as also a Yāmala of the same name, and Dattātreya is a Rishi said to be particularly revered by the Nakulāvadhūta Sect. The Tantras generally were, as stated in the text, revealed by Śiva.

[2] See same author's (Monier Williams), Sanskrit Dictionary, *sub voce* "bhuta," where also are given some inaccurate definitions of the Ṣatcakra.

[3] "Country and Temple of Kāmākhyā," *Calcutta Review*, October, 1911.

[4] "The New Dispensation," pp. 103, 109. Nor, it may be here noted, is it correct to say that Tāntriks believe the universe to have been developed by the inherent power of matter, as stated in the "Cyclopaedia of India," vol. v, p 72. Nor is it correct to speak, as H. H. Wilson did ("Essays," p. 241), of the "worship of the female principle as distinct from the Divinity."

[5] "The Soul of India," by G. Howells, p. 320.

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led a Bengali apologist of the Śāstra, when writing some twenty years ago on the subject of Tantra, to say:[1] "Unfortunately, however, their intentions have been so grossly misrepresented in our days that the very name of Tantra shocks our nerves; yet two-thirds of our religious rites are Tāntrik, and almost half our medicine is Tāntrik."

The causes of this neglect of the Śāstra in the country of its origin and in the West are several. Their consideration will also explain the standpoint from which this book here translated is written. In the first place, in the case of India, must be reckoned the effects of English education. This, when first introduced, not merely struck at faith in all Indian Śāstra, but was in a particular manner adverse to that form of it which was then current, and with which we here deal. Tāntrik Hinduism is in its more common aspect, essentially of a sacramental and ritualistic character. Those who first introduced and gave English education were for the most part Protestants, with no sympathy with, or understanding of, a mode of religious thought and practice which to a considerable extent, both in its inner spirit and outward forms, bore resemblance to that which in Europe, Protestantism, in its various sects, had arisen to oppose. Their general attitude is illustrated by a passage in a recent work[2] (containing a singularly ignorant and unjust estimate of Hinduism), in which the author says that, when standing before a Buddhist shrine, he felt as if he was before that of St. Carlo Borromeo at Milan, adding: "But the chief feeling that one had was of the extraordinary close similarity of Latin Christianity and Pre-christian Buddhism—the feeling and sensation of the *same immemorial superstition* persisting through the forms and ritual of two religions so diametrically opposed." As this matter presented itself to the English teachers, so it did to the Indian students, who (to use a Bengali expression) "held their tail." This the latter did the more readily both because of the abuses for which some of the followers of the

[1] "Lectures on the Hindu Religion," by K. Chakravarthi (1893), itself an inaccurate, though well-intentioned, little book.

[2] "The Light of Asia," by Harold Begbie, p. 148.

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Śāstra were responsible and of the unintelligent and mechanical formalism of the worship of others. To the Hindu so educated the Tantra was in all its parts as much superstitious "mummery" as it was to his English teachers. This education did not, however, from the religious point of view, bear the results which were expected of it. For while many Hindus were led through such teaching to reject their ancestral belief, but few were found who were willing to accept the form of faith which was offered to them as its substitute. Possibly to some extent different results might have been achieved had there been more points of contact between the two faiths, for these might have served both to guard the common religious sentiment and to afford some sort of foundation upon which a Christian structure might have been raised. Such had been the thought, in earlier times, of Jesuit missionaries both in India and China. Many of the Hindus whose faith had been unduly disturbed commenced (so far as Indians can—a matter for them of fortunate difficulty) to question the validity of the religious sense itself. A period of scepticism then followed, which, of course, has not wholly passed away in India any more than it will wholly pass away elsewhere.

Theories stale in the West, but new in the East, were adopted by some with the same indiscriminating fervour as were the discarded fashions of English "art" and articles of commerce. Some there were who, judging all things by a narrow test of "utilitarian" principle, found every historic religion, whether of East or West, to be the outcome merely of the deceit of priests, whose "highest achievement" in all lands has been "abomination worship." And of this in India[1] the Śākta and other cults were cited as the worst examples.[2]

The use of this strong language applied to all the religions of East and West suggests the observation that, while grounds

[1] As regards the West, the author of the work cited is of opinion that the system of auricular confession made further priestly efforts in the direction of "abomination worship" supererogatory.

[2] "Hindu Castes and Sects," by J. N. Bhattāchārji. I cite this apparently nāstika work as one of a type only, it being fairly well known and read. The author writes down even the Buddha as an ambitious schemer.

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for adverse judgment may have existed, we must examine the criticisms by Hindus of the beliefs of their countrymen as we would any other, in order to see whether the author knows that of which he speaks, and, if so, whether he is free (which the author cited was not) from prejudice against "religion" in general, or the sectarianism which exists in India, as elsewhere.[1] Nor is the language used in such cases to be always taken literally. If, for instance, we can imagine the astonished mind of an otherwise uninformed Hindu, after the perusal of the stanza of the 'Orange" hymn cited below,[2] it is not improbable to suppose that a too literal understanding of its words might give him notions as to the "obscenity" of the tenets and practice of the Catholic Church which would appear exaggerated even to the inflamed judgment of the author of the "hymn" in question.

In the West this raw philosophizing has for some time past been appreciated at its true value. More mature views will find a deeper source for the religious instinct than the machinations (even though they exist) of priests.

The following passage from another writer,[3] purporting to give the verdict of "New India on Religion," is, in its blustering crudities, reminiscent of our own cheap rationalism of the second half of the last century:

"The world is passing from faith to reason. The future is for reason. When reason is established the problem of the world will be easy of solution. Reason will stand no miracles, no humbug, no special incarnations or exclusive revelations. It will elbow out all creeds, and admit nothing which cannot be demonstrated to the intelligence. Forms of worship are excrescences of religion. Belief in the supernatural and transcendent is getting into a discount. The element of mystery

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[1] Particular animosity used to exist, and amongst the sectarian-minded still exists, between Śāktas and Vaiṣnavas.

[2] "Scarlet Church of all uncleanness,
Sink thou to the deep abyss,
To the orgies of obsceneness,
Where the Hell-bound Furies hiss,
Where thy father's Satan's eye
Hails thee, hellish Popery."

[3] The *Indian World,* July, 1910.

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once believed to be an inseparable factor of religion is disappearing," and so forth.

They are but weakly met by such mawkish presentments of the "Religion of the Future" as those of which the following passage is a vaguely-conceived and worded, however well-intentioned, example: "No priest can lead us by the nose and make us believe in meaningless practices which profit no one but the professional priest![1] Free thought will be the watchword of the churches of the future. Religion will be a real being, becoming. Growing in life from within like an endogen; drawing sustenance also from without. Religion is to be in tune with the infinite. It will be the budding forth of the lotus of the heart; the correspondence with the environments of the soul; the opening out of the fountains from within; the setting aflow of the waters of life proceeding from the throne of the Most High. Religion will not be a theorem, a Q.E.D., but a problem, Q.E.F."[2]

A more definite attempt to reconcile religious tradition and "modern thought" was made by the Brāhmasamāj, the doctrines of which, as also of the Secularist school, are combated in this book. The Ādisamāj, which preceded it, more closely adhered to orthodox Hinduism, being distinguished from the latter by the rejection of some of its beliefs and practices. In the Brāhmasamāj the doctrines became of a more syncretistic character. There was a further divergence from orthodoxy, and an attempt was made to incorporate alien forms of thought and ritual. The Brāhmasamāj describes itself in the words of one of its prominent supporters as "a humble gleaner of the truth wherever found." The resulting eclecticism possesses its share of the weaknesses of all such systems.

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[1] This and the rest of the quotation are, of course, inspired by a type of Western thought. To the Hindu mantra is not mere akṣara, nor guru a mere man, but the manifestation of the Supreme and only Guru, the Ādinātha Mahākāla. The revolt, however, is supported to some extent by the fact of the incompetence of many of the gurus.

[2] "The Religion of the Future," by Hemendra Nath Sinha, B.A., pp. 38, 39. The last sentence is like the rest obscure, but perhaps indicates the workings of the pragmatic bacillus even in the East.

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All these influences, the outcome of English education—whether they be of the Secularist type, abandoning all ancient forms of beliefs, or of that which claims to reform but as often destroys them, or of the more modern kind which seeks a belief which shall be freed of form—led away from the standpoint of orthodox form, which is that of the Tantra. The process was accelerated by the decadence of many of the followers of the Vāmācāra community governed by the Śāstra.

In the general neglect of Śāstra, and repulsion caused by abuse, no attempt was made to ascertain what in fact were the true teachings of that portion of it which governed this community. No distinction was made between such doctrine and the abuses of it, nor between the particular portion of the Śāstra prescribing and regulating Vāmācāra ritual and those other portions which governed other divisions of Sādhakas or the community in general. The Śāstra was, generally in its entirety, condemned as useless where it was not considered morally harmful. To some extent these conclusions may have influenced European Orientalists, but probably in much less degree; for scientific investigation of human activities in whatsoever sphere is not (without closure of all historical inquiry) to be thwarted by the fear that what may be found on investigation is not that which is likely to be approved. Nor are the difficulties of a linguistic character, the Tantras being written in comparatively simple Sanskrit. The reason is rather to be found in difficulties of a different kind.

The Tantra in some of its aspects is a secret doctrine (gupta-vidyā) to be gathered, not from the written record, but verbally from those who hold the key to it. So with Eastern allegory it is said: "Verily, verily, and without a doubt the Veda Śāstra and Purānas are like a common woman, free to all, but the doctrine of Śambhu (*i.e.*, the Tantra) is like a secret house bride, to reveal which is death."[1] The key to the method has been with the initiate.

[1] Vedaśāstrapurānāni sāmānyaganikā iva
Yā punah śāmbhavī vidyā guptā kulabadhūriva
Prakāśe prānahānih syāt satyang satyang na sangṣayah.
So also the Tantrasāra (Ed. R. M. Chatterji), p. 691, which says: "Kadāchid-dehahānistu na chāgupti kadāchana, varam pūjā na karttavyā na chaa vyaktih kadāchana."

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Next there are two special difficulties as regards the record; firstly, its fragmentary character and its existence in manuscripts which are not easily procurable, and then the technical character of the terminology. Next, the ritualistic character of the Tantra requires as a preliminary for its exposition at least some general knowledge regarding the subject, which does not ordinarily exist except among Hindus. In the case of certain Tāntric doctrines and practices, the more ordinary difficulties have been increased owing to the complex and esoteric character of the rituals, and, as some allege, to the existence of higher and lower traditions (āmnāya), which to-day have become confused. Lastly, while the Śāstra provides by its various ācāras for all types, from the lowest to the most advanced, its essential concepts, under whatever aspects they are manifested, and into whatever pattern they are woven, are (as Professor de la Vallée Poussin says of the Buddhist Tantra) of a metaphysical and subtle character. This is particularly so as regards Śaktitattva, Mantratattva, and Yogatattva, though there are others. It is claimed that the true Tāntrikācārya is the master of Veda, and that its esoteric teaching can only be fully understood from the Śāstra and its accompanying traditions, and the personal experiences which are the practical fruits of its Sādhana.

Since this work was first published the so-called "progressive" movement has been followed by a reaction in the orthodox Hindu world, which is not without its own defects.[1] The spread of Theosophical ideas first renewed an interest in the teachings of India's great past, and an awakening national spirit has done the rest. The Tantra has had a share in this interest as is manifested in the fair number of Tantras, Tāntrik compendia such as the Prānatoṣinī,[2] and other works on the

[1] To those, for instance, whose supposed "Hindu" sentiment would revive the practice of Satī may be recommended the words of the Mahānirvāna Tantra: "O Kuleśāni, a wife should *not* be burnt with her dead husband. *Every woman is thy image.* Thou residest concealed in the forms of all women in this world (tava svārūpā ramaṇi jagatyāchchhannavigrahā). That woman who in her delusion (moha) ascends the funeral pyre of her lord *shall go to hell*" (chap. x, verses 79-80).

[2] From the same source comes the Prānakriṣnaśabdāmbuddhi, which I hope to publish.

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Śāstra (of which that now translated is one), which have been first published or reprinted in recent years. It is a sign of the times to find even a Brāhma publication on the Ṣatcakra.[1] This interest is due in part to the general religious revival in progress, and also to the increasing recognition of the necessity of sādhana (practice), as distinct from mere philosophizing, if any practical result is to be attained.

According to orthodox views, the Tantra will continue in force until the close of the Kaliyuga, when the golden age (Satya yuga) will reappear, governed by its appropriate Śāstra. The India of to-day is, however, not in the same sense as of yore the "Śrī Bhārata, adored of the Devas" (Surārchitabhārata), to which the book now published makes salutation.

The author has many a lament over the changes occurring in what appears to him to be a darkening time.

"If to-day all men had the strength of faith of Kāmadeva Tārkika, hero most powerful in the field of austerity, or of Ganeśa Upādhyāya, whose life was one long surrender to the Mother; or of Rāmaprasāda,[2] who was, as it were, a bee intoxicated with the honey of the lotus feet of Śakti,[3] should we in that case have to sing in Tantra Tattva[4] the song of all these evil designs (against the Śāstras). But the day is now lost to us. That unflinching faith in Tantra, the Sādhana-Śāstra, has been shaken."[5]

"Alas! the lion-hearted heroes, pillars of Sanātana Dharma! where are you to-day in this dismal time? That resplendent lustre of yours hallowed by Sādhana, is mingled with the Mantra Śāstra itself. Do ye to-day shed that lustre in every letter, in every accent. Let the Śāstra of Bhārata be again resplendent with the fire of the Tapas[6] of Bhārata's sons."[7]

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[1] Gāyatrīmūlaka ṣatcakrervyākyāna o sādhanā, a publication by the Mangala Ganga Mission Press.

[2] The celebrated Bengali poet and Śākta.

[3] Śakri is Devī—that is, both the power of God and God Himself. Each of the Devas has His Śakti or power worshipped under the form of His spouse.

[4] This book.

[5] See post.

[6] Austerities, etc. (see *Introduction*).

[7] See post.

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But his cause is not wholly lost to him, and he continues to defend it—with a certain spacious splendour of imagery and feeling which belong to a passing world.

"Reasoning, argument and inference may be the work of other Śāstras, but the work of Tantra is to accomplish superhuman and divine[1] events by the force of its own Mantras. Destruction, driving away, and establishment of control,[2] and such other powers, are still to be daily seen. Hundreds of thousands of great and accomplished Sādhakas still illumine all India with the glory of their austerities.[3] In every cremation ground[4] in India the refulgent and divine halo of Bhairavas and Bhairavīs[5] is yet to be seen mingling with the light of the flames of funeral pyres, rending apart the waves of nocturnal darkness and illuminating the wide expanse of Heaven. Dead and putrefying corpses submerged[6] near cremation grounds are still brought to life by the force of the Sādhakas' Mantras and made to render aid to Sādhana and Siddhi. Whilst still living in this mortal world Tāntrik Yogīs even now obtain, through the potency of Mantras, direct vision of the supersensual activities of the world of Devas. She, with dishevelled hair, the dispeller of fear from the hearts of Her devotees, still appears in great cremation grounds,[7] to give liberation to Her devoted Sādhakas who, made afraid by the fear of this existence, make obeisance to and supplicate Her. Sādhakas still merge themselves in the Self of Brahman by laying their Brahmarandhra[8] at those lotus feet of Brahmamayī,[9] which are adored by Brahmā and other Devas. The throne of the Daughter of the Mountain[10]

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[1] Daiva. [2] Māraṇam, Ucchātanam, Vaśīkaraṇam. [3] Tapas.

[4] Smaśāna, where Śavāsana, Muṇḍāsana, Latāsādhana and other Tāntrik rites, are practised.

[5] Adept Tāntrik men and women.

[6] Before and whilst awaiting burning, the corpse is placed in the sacred stream.

[7] Mahāsmaśānas, where some of the most difficult forms of Tāntrik Sādhana are practised. The auspicious Kālikā is thought of as with dishevelled hair (vigalitachihurā), and so is the hair of the devotee (see Karpūrādi stotra, verses 3, 10).

[8] The cavity of Brahman at the top of the head, here used for the head generally.

[9] The Devī. [10] The Devī as daughter of Himavat.

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is still moved by the wondrous, attractive force of Mantras. This, in the eyes of Sādhakas, is the ever broad and royal road upon which they travel untiring to the city of liberation."[1]

The same forces, however, against which this book, as also other orthodoxies, protest, are in conflict both with Hinduism in its present Tāntrik form and with Christianity of the older type. In the present mingling of East and West, each is providing a ferment for the other, which, when all is said, is as much a divine product as the Revelations which it sometimes appears to threaten. The embodied Ātmā, however, *must* ever seek itself revealing its search to us in that which we call the "religious spirit," clothed though It must also be in forms new or renewed[2] —its changing expression in a world of unceasing change.

* * * * *

For the understanding of the Tāntrik, or, indeed, any other beliefs and practices, the usual dry-as-dust investigation of the savant is insufficient. In the first place a call should be made upon actual present experience. The primary inquiry should be addressed to the ascertainment of the present belief and practice of those whose religious history is under investigation. It is obvious that the course of time effects changes. But whatever these may be, present beliefs are the descendants of those of the past. Much, therefore, which was in the parent will be found in the child. A study of the present will help to an understanding of ancient documents which, if made the sole basis of research, often prove the source of error. For these reasons I have selected a modern exposition of the general basis of Tāntrik doctrine by one who, as its adherent, has inherited its tradition, (vaktrādvaktrena). We are now recommencing to value tradition, which everywhere provides the key to truth. It is in all religions of equal if not of greater truth than the imperfect and sometimes falsified documentary evidence we at present possess of their origin and history.

Whatever may be the case upon the purely historical questions which have been raised in connection with the Śāstra,

[1] See post.

[2] Hinduism is already taking on a new life.

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with respect to doctrine and practice, the first and simplest course is to learn from the lips of its living adherents what in fact they are, and, in so far as they can be given, the reason of and authority for them.

Mere book-learning (pustake likitā), will not carry the student the full way without error. It must be supplemented by information derived from the Tāntrik Ācāryas and Gurus. The truth of learning so gained can only be tested by personal experience.

Hindu beliefs, to be understood aright, should, if possible, be learned both of those who have not, as also of those who have, received an English education. The latter—in the past, at any rate—has generally involved the neglect of, and (prior to the recent national movement) often resulted in a contempt for, all that is ancient and specifically Hindu, whether in Religion, Literature, or Art.[1] In its tendency it is not only—under its present conditions, at any rate, and whether for good or ill—destructive of tradition, but also in varying degrees of the *mentality* which originally produced the beliefs, and by which alone they may be completely apprehended. Even in cases where competency assumes a favourable attitude towards the ancient teaching, there is often to be found a tendency to read modern ideas into it.

A modern Indian publicist and author[2] makes upon this matter some very just observations. In treating of the concept "mother" as applied to India by her children, he says that there is no mere metaphor behind it, though most modern educated Hindus understand the word in a poetical and metaphorical sense. "But this is," he says, "because their education and environment have more or less completely diverted their thought and imagination from the ancient *realities* of their language and literature. There are, indeed, numerous words in common use amongst us to-day that have entirely lost their

[1] As regards the two former, see the observations in Babu Dinesh Chandra Sen's valuable "History of Bengali Literature," published by the Calcutta University. As to Art, a limited residence in India will afford distressing proof.

[2] Bepin Behary Pal, "The Soul of India," p. 145.

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original sense, *owing to the loss of the genuine thought-life of the people* in the wilderness of un-understood and un-assimilated foreign words and concepts accumulated by our present system of education. *With the Europeanization of our minds and modes of thinking*, even our words have been perceptibly Europeanized." This criticism has a very extensive application, and one is reminded of it at every step in reading the works of English-educated Hindus on Hindu life and thought, which their prudent reader will in some instances do well to peruse, bearing the above well-founded remarks in mind. As regards his countrymen, the author, in the second part[1] of this work, observes: "Nowadays, most of those who represent the ideal type of a learned man in society are considered ignorant and devoid of all sense in the community of the Religious (Sādhakas)." It is also to be remembered that amongst the English-speaking Hindus who have attained success and even distinction there are many who, being of other castes, have neither inherited the traditions of the Brāhmana nor had the benefit of his teaching. Interpretations coming from these classes are likely (though exceptions may exist) to suffer by reason of their ancient disabilities.

The Tantratattva (Principles or subject matter of Tantra), of which the first part is here translated, is, so far as I am aware, the only considerable modern work of its kind. It was written in Bengali by Pandit Śiva Chandra Vidyārnava Bhattāchārya,[2] and first published some twenty years ago, being now in its second edition.

The present work is a defence of the Tantra, of which Śāstra the author is an adherent and a polemic, undertaken in the interests of Hindu orthodoxy in its Śākta and Tāntrika form against Secularism on the one hand, and on the other the

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[1] See chapter on Gurukula and Kulaguru.

[2] Editor of the journal *Śaivi*, and author of several other works—"Gītānjali," "Mā," "Svabhāva o abhāva," "Vidyārnaver durgotsava," "Kartā o Mana," "Pīthamālā," "Gangeśa."

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religious eclecticism and various "reforming" movements, of which, when the book was first written, the Brāhmasamāji was a leading type. In fact, in parts the book reads like an orthodox Catholic protest against "modernism," and is thus interesting as showing how many fundamental principles are common to all orthodox forms of belief, whether of West or East.

The author of the Tantratattva is a well-known Tāntrik Pandit, preacher, and secretary of the Sarvamangalāsabhā of Benares, who, happily for our purposes, knows no English. His work, which is written in Bengali, may therefore be taken to be an accurate popular statement of modern orthodox views on the subject treated of by him. The word "Tattva" is a very comprehensive one, which it is by no means always easy to translate. I have rendered the title of the book as "Principles of Tantra," though, maybe, as a friend has pointed out, it should be "Subjects of Tantra." The work deals, it is true, with chosen topics of Tantra. This, however, also involves a statement of certain fundamental principles which govern Śāstrik teaching on the subjects dealt with, and this as well as the contents of possible future volumes must be my justification for giving the book a more ambitious title.

The author is both a poet and a preacher—a circumstance which accounts for the rhetorical style and popular devotional character of the work. Apart from such intrinsic merits as it may possess, it is of value as a document which records the thought and workings of an Indian mind affected but little, if at all, by the current notions of the day. It deals in the main, and in a popular way, with the philosophical and religious grounds of the orthodox system in its Śākta form. As regards some of its practical aspects, the author has considered that this was a subject fitter for the reader's Guru than for a book addressed to the public at large. It may therefore have proved a disappointment to those who, at the mention of Tantra, always expect to hear of rituals with wine and women, the midnight circle (Cakra), black magic in the cremation grounds, and so forth. The constant desire to hear of such things is not evidence of a true interest in the Śāstra, but a confession of personal

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weakness.[1] To such it may come as a surprise to learn that the Tantra also concerns itself with matters of undoubted respectability even to its critics, and of universal, if less sensational, interest. It is commonly assumed by such persons (though altogether erroneously) that the Tantra Śāstra is only concerned with the Cakra ritual of those who are called (but incorrectly so) "lefthand" upāsakas, who follow vīrācāra.[2] This, however, is of course not the fact. On the contary, the main subjects of Tantra are Mantra and Sādhana in all its forms. It is also the chief repository of Yoga practice, and its general range of subject, as hereafter mentioned, is encyclopædic.

As Professor B. K. Sarkar has well said, the encyclopædias of India known under diverse names, such as Samhitās, Purāṇas and Tantras, are really generic terms under which the *whole culture* of certain epochs in Indian history found expression and currency. He adds that, while it is difficult and sometimes impossible to assign to such storehouses of information respecting the national life the names of any particular authors or compilers and the question of their dates may never be solved satisfactorily, they furnish undeniable, though sometimes conflicting accounts, of the manners and customs, rites and ceremonies, sects and Sampradāyas, sentiments and traditions, which prevailed among the Hindus for epochs extending over hundreds of years.

The translation is primarily the work of my friend Babu Jñānendralāl Majumdār, himself a Bengali. My own part has consisted in its revision. The translation may read rather cumbrously in parts, but this is due to our desire to keep as close as possible to the somewhat discursive and rhetorical form of the original. I have added some explanatory notes to the text. I should have liked to have made the notes fuller if it could have

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[1] Inquiry as to these matters is, to use a chess term, a common though bad "opening" for those who have a real desire to know the Śāstra.

[2] In "Non-Christian Religions," by Howard, pp. 77-78. The author, after a statement that the "Tāntrik System" originated with the Buddhist monk Asanga, says: "*Further than this* we must decline to plunge, even with the parts of the Tantra accessible to English readers." I am unaware of any parts "accessible to English readers" when this statement was made, and the author was evidently ignorant of any other.

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been done without overloading the text. I have, however, referred in the notes to the Introduction written for my edition of the Mahānirvāna Tantra,[1] where I have explained at greater length such terms as "yantra," "mantra," "mudrā," "nyāsa," "panchatattva," the "ṣatcakra," and others, and have in a general and summary way dealt with sādhana, upāsana, and hathayoga. I have retained certain technical Sanskrit terms in the text, as there is no corresponding English word which accurately gives their meaning.

The following pages deal with certain general aspects of the Śāstra, its nature, origin, age, and authority—subjects which were either not then treated of or were more summarily referred to. If upon some of these topics, such as the age of the Śāstra, I have not presented sufficiently certain and detailed conclusions, it is because, for want of the necessary knowledge, I am unable to do so. The subject is a novel one, and possibly many years of inquiry into Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan records[2] will have to be made before opinions of any finality can be formed as to many matters in and touching the Śāstra.

* * * * *

Current definitions of Tantra as "Sacred writings of the Hindus," "Scriptures of Śāktas," "Collections of Magical Treatises," and the like, are either inaccurate and insufficient, or by their generality useless. A type of such inaccurate statements characterized by the usual vagueness and indecision says that: "The Tantras are a later development of the Puranic creed. They are the writings of Śāktas or votaries of the female energy of some Divinity (*sic*), mostly the wife of Śiva. Such ideas are not altogether absent in the Puranic works. But in the Tantras they assume a peculiar character, owing to the admixture of magic performances and mystic rites of perhaps

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[1] The references to the Introduction are, unless otherwise stated, to that work, since published as *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[2] Indian tradition connects China and the Tantra, and both Chinese and Tibetan records are reputed to contain Sanskrit works which have long since disappeared from India.

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an indelicate nature. Amarasinha knows not of them."[1] In passing, it may be noted that this reference to the Amarakośa is a common one. It is true that the word Tantra is not mentioned in the svargavarga of the book. On the other hand, those who so cite it omit to state that some other ancient Śāstras, including the Atharvaveda, are not there mentioned; and in the Nānārthavarga reference is made to Āgama Śāstra, which is one of the names of Tantra. An anonymous author who writes on what he calls "Transformed Hinduism"[2] says, after a description of the Purānas, "Another literature of a still more degrading type has been incorporated in the modern Hinduism, and this is the religious books called the Tantras, of which there are sixty-four volumes.[3] These books are mostly manuals of mysticism and magic, written otherwise very much on the same lines as the purānas. The religion advocated in these books is the exponent (*sic*) of Śāktism, the wife of Śiva (*sic*), under her various manifestations." Whilst the Indian author last quoted rather vaguely refers to "mystic rites of perhaps an indelicate character" the book now cited more definitely affirms: "It is a licentious worship, and leads to cruelty, self-indulgence, and sensual gratification. Hence it is a blot upon the 'Modern Hinduism.' This sect goes under the name of the Bahm Marges (*sic*), or the secret sect."[4] The Accounts of these and other uninformed authors treat the Tantra as a Śāstra of the Śāktas only where they do not as in the last cited quotation regard it merely as the Śāstra of the Vāmāchāra community of Śākta Sādhakas.

The word Tantra has various meanings, and amongst others Śāstra generally, and therefore does not necessarily

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[1] "History of Classical and Sanskrit Literature," by M. Krishnamacharya, M.A., B.L., p. 34.

[2] P. 180.

[3] The author, in speaking of these "volumes" as he calls them, is thinking of the 64 Tantras assigned to each of the three krāntās, which make them, however, so far as such divisions are concerned, 192 and not 64.

[4] The author means the vāma mārga, or vāmācāra, as it is ordinarily called. The Tantra does not only deal with this "sect," which is one only of its ācāras, the tenets of which the author does not understand. Dakṣinācāras and others are also followers of Tantra. The work is incorrect both as to the Tantra and other Śāstras and practices of the Hindus which it proposes to "transform."

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denote a religious Śāstra.[1] In the sense, however, in which the term is most widely known and is here used, it denotes that body of religious scripture (Śāstra) which is stated to have been revealed by Śiva as the specific scripture of the fourth or present Kali age (yuga). This is the definition of the Tantra according to the Śāstra itself.

There are four such ages (Mahāyuga)—namely, the Satya yuga, or golden age; the Tretā yuga, age in which righteousness (dharma) decreased by one-fourth; the Dvāpara yuga, in which dharma decreased by one-half; and the present Kali yuga, the most evil of the ages, in which righteousness exists to the extent of one-fourth only. At the close of this last age the Kalki Avatāra of Viṣnu, "the rider on the white horse," will destroy iniquity and restore the rule of righteousness. Each of these ages has its appropriate Śāstra, or Scripture, which is designed to meet the requirements of the men of each age.

The Hindu Śāstras are classed into Śruti, Smṛti, Purāna, and Tantra. The three last all assume the first as their base, and are, in fact, merely special presentments of it for the respective ages. It has been said that the Tantras "are regarded by those who follow them as a fifth Veda as ancient as the others and of superior authority."[2] No Śāstra is or can be superior to the Veda. That practical application of its teachings, however, which is prescribed in the Tantra is to be followed in preference to the vaidikācāra in the Kaliyuga. The relations of the Veda to the Tantra has been compared with that of the Jīvātmā to the Paramātmā. The Tantra is said by its adherents to represent the inner core of the former. Professor de la Vallée Poussin says[3]: "Si l'on veut instituer une comparaison qui d'ailleurs n'est pas sans danger on sera frappé des *ressemblances inaperçues*

[1] Thus in the Śabdaśaktiprakāśikā it is said: "Tarkangtantranchavidushā vidushāngtoshakārikā, kriyate jagadīshena"; where Tantra means the theory or science of argument. So the Pañchatantra, which the so-called "Tāntrik Order of America" includes in its *International Journal* amongst the Sanskrit and Tibetan Tantras, is not a Tantra in the sense here dealt with at all, but a book of fables.

[2] Beveridge, "History of India," ii. 77. And to the same effect "Biblical, etc., Encyclopaedia," McClintoch and Strong, xii, 864.

[3] Bouddhisme Études et Matériaux.

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qui permettent de rapprocher ces deux manifestations si différentes de la pensée Hindoue, le Védisme et le Tantrisme." These resemblances which struck the learned author are, of course, due to the fact that there is a base common to the Veda and the Tantra, the latter being, according to orthodox notions, a branch of the Vaidik tree. It is only those who would altogether dissociate the Tantra from the Veda who will experience any surprise at finding resemblances between the Śāstras for the respective ages. As the Kulārṇava Tantra says, for each age (yuga) a suitable Śāstra is given—namely, in Satyayuga, Śruti; in Tretā, Smṛti; in Dvāpara the Purānas; and in the Kali age the Tantra.[1] The truth to be taught ever remains the same, though the method of inculcating it varies with the ages. Current definitions, when not incorrect, fail to bring out this character of the Tantra as a Yuga (age) Śāstra and its relations to the other Scriptures. As, however, our author well says[2] it is by no means impossible that now towards the end of the Kali age a few parasites should be found growing on some of its branches.

The original and highest source of dharma is Śruti, or that "which has been heard," and which is the *ipsissima verba* of divine revelation. The Vedas are apauruṣeya (without any personal composer), manifested to the Ṛṣis who were not their authors, but only their Seers (draṣṭārah). The term "Śruti" is sometimes used in (what is to some) an extended sense, as where Kulluka Bhatta speaks of Tantra (which has sometimes been described as the fifth Veda) as Śruti (vaidikī tāntrikīchaiva dvividhā kīrttitā Śrutih). Popularly, however, the term is limited to the four Vedas—Ṛk, Sāma, Yajus, and Atharva—and the Upaniṣads, of which, Professor Paul Deussen says: "Die Upaniṣads, sind für den Veda was für die Bibel das neue

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[1] Krite śrutyuktāchārastretāyyāng smṛtisambhavah
Dvāpare tu purānoktang kalau āgamakevalam.
See also Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap, i, verse 28, and Kubjikā Tantra, where Śruti, Smṛti, and Purāna are assigned to the first three ages, and Tantra to the fourth.

[2] See *post.* And as to the relation of Āgama and Veda, see Mahābhāgavata cited, *post.*

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Testament ist."[1] In its primary signification the term "Vedānta" means the latter part of the Veda. The Jñānakāṇḍa of the Vedas is therefore the Vedānta in the original sense of the word. As such it is Śruti, and therefore in this sense the Vedānta is identical with the Upaniṣads, which teach as the gist of Vaidik doctrine the knowledge of the Absolute Being (Paramātmā) and union with It. The Devas worshipped in the Mantras of the Karmakāṇḍa are, as well as the whole visible universe, but manifestations of It—the "Tat Sat," or the Reality. Based on Upaniṣad is the Vedānta Darśana, or philosophy embodied in the Vedānta Sūtras ascribed to Vyāsa, which have again been the subject of the commentaries known as Śaṅkarabhāṣyam (of Śaṅkarācārya), Śrībhāṣyam (of Rāmānuja), Mādhvabhāṣyam (of Madhva), and the less important Govindabhāṣyam.

Smṛti is "that which is remembered," and has been handed down by Ṛṣis. It is regarded as the expression of the Divine Will conveyed to mankind by inspiration through the agency of human beings. It is divided into the Śrauta sūtras, dealing with Vaidik ceremonies, and the Gṛhya sūtras, concerning the household rites; the prose Dharma sūtras, which lay down rules of law properly so called (of which there are various caranas or schools, such as those of Gautama, Baudhāyana, Āpastamba, Vaśiṣṭah, and others), and Dharma Śāstras, or metrical versions of previously existing dharma-sūtras, such as the Code of Manu (Manusmṛti), the Yājñavalkya, Nārada, Parāśara Smṛtis, and other fragmentary Dharma Śāstras and secondary Smṛtis of later periods. On these Smṛtis there are various commentaries, such as those of Medhātithi, Kulluka Bhatta, and others on the Manu Smṛti; the commentaries on the Yājñavalkya Smṛti by Vijnāneśvara (known as the Mitākṣarā), and others; commentaries on the Parāśara Smṛti; and other commentaries such as those on the Mitākṣarā. These commentaries have given rise to various schools of law, such as the Mitākṣarā, Dāyabhāga, Mithilā, and others. Smṛti provides for pravritti dharma, as the Upaniṣads had revealed the path of nivritti, or, as it is loosely called, "renunciation."

[1] "Die Geheimlehre des Veda" (1909).

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The third Śāstra, that of the Dvāpara yuga, is that contained in the Purānas, the principal of those now extant being eighteen in number.[1] They by myth and story convey in an exoteric manner the doctrines of the Vedas to the declining intelligence and spirituality of the men of the third age. Like, however, the Tantra, they deal with nearly every subject of knowledge—theogonies, cosmogonies, genealogies, chronology, the astronomical, physical, and other sciences. In addition to the Mahāpurānas, there are the secondary Purānas or Upapurānas.[2] Both of these are referred to in the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, when dealing with the Śāstra of the different ages, as Samhitā. This word, which literally means "collection," and, according to the Śabdaratnāvali, includes Dharma Śāstra, Smṛti, Śrutijīvikā, also comprises[3] Purāna, Upapurāna, Itihāsa (history such us Māhābhārata and Rāmāyana), the work of Vālmīki, Vaśiṣtha, and others.

The specific Śāstra for the fourth or Kaliyuga (according to orthodox views, the present age) is the Tantra. Though there are Āgamas or Tantras which are called Śiva and Śākta or Devī (according to the particular form of the One which is regarded therein as Iṣtadevatā), it is, according to orthodox notions, a mistake to regard the Tantra generally as if it were a petty Śāstra of any particular division of Hindu worshippers. It is said, on the contrary, to be a universal Śāstra governing all men in the Kali age, though particular provisions in it may have reference to particular divisions of worshippers. Thus, while certain communities who perform the rahasyapūjā make use of wine in worship, others do not, and it is, in fact, forbidden to them by the Tantra itself, as is the specific Śaktipūjā associated with such use. So the Nityā Tantra prohibits the latter in the

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[1] The Viṣnu Bhāgavata (it is a matter of dispute whether this is the Srimadbhāgavata or Devī Bhāgavata, both of which are largely quoted in this book); Nāradiya; Garuda; Padma; Varāha; or Vaiṣnava Purānas; Śiva, Liṅga, Skanda, Agni (or, according to other accounts, Vāyu), Matsya, Kūrma; or Śaiva Purānas; the Brahma, Brahmānda, Brahmavaivarta, Mārkandeya, Bhaviṣya, and Vāmana Purānas.

[2] Kālikā, Sanatkumāra, Nārasingha, and others.

[3] See Brahmavaivarta Purāna, Jñānakhāṇda, chap. cxxxii.

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case of the Paśu[1] (rātrau naiva yajeddevīng sandhyāyāng vāparānhake). On the other hand, other portions of the Tantra govern the whole orthodox Hindu community. So not only the Śakti mantra, but also the Viṣnu and Śiva mantras are Tāntrik. The Tāntrika Sandhyā may be said by all, and the Śāstra is the source of the bulk of the generally current ritual. A remark of a friend who read the first part of this book, "that he could find little of the Tantra in it,"[2] is typical of the general misconceptions which prevail as to the nature of the Śāstra.

It is true that the so-called "Śākta" Tantras prescribe, in the case of one of the Ācāras, a form of sādhana peculiar to this ācāra known as the Panchatattva,[3] or worship with wine, meat, fish, grain, and woman (Śakti): and not uncommonly the Tantra is associated with such worship only, with the result that a "Tāntrik" has come to connote, in the minds of many, merely a Hindu who practises this Sādhana. Less narrow and crude notions popularly associate the Tantra with the Śākta cult only, though they would include all forms of worship within the Śākta community, and do not limit the scope of governance of the Tantra to the community of Vāmācārins worshipping with the rājasika Panchatattva. The reason for such views appears to be this: Though there may have been Śaiva Tantras, as there have been what are called Śaiva Purānas, and there are Tantras such as the Rādhā Tantra, which deal with the Viṣnu cult; and though in ordinary worship there is adoration of the "Five Devatās"[4] (Panchopāsanā), yet in those scriptures which are more usually referred to when the Tantra is spoken

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[1] Because such worship connotes maithuna, which is not for the paśu on the path of pravritti, and who is still in the heavy bonds of desire.

[2] Because it does not deal with those *portions* of the Tantra which are concerned with the Panchatattva, virācāra, etc.

[3] This is the term used by Tāntriks themselves in speaking of the conjoined elements. Vulgarly, they are called the "five M's" (panchamakāra), because each of the ordinary names of the elements commences with that letter (madya, māngsa, matsya, mudrā, maithuna). Some of these have, however, esoteric names used by Tāntriks amongst themselves. "Latā Sādhana" is a better and in some cases more accurate description of the fifth tattva than the word 'maithuna" with its vulgar implications.

[4] Śiva, Viṣnu, Sūrya, Ganeśa, and the Devī.

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of, the worship of Śakti assumes a more special form. All such notions, however, as regards Tantra, though popular, bespeak according to its followers a fundamental misconception of the scope of the Śāstra.[1] Properly speaking, a Tāntrik should be defined as one who is governed by and follows the provisions of Tantra which are applicable to his particular case. In 1881 Dr. Rajendra Lal Mitra[2] wrote that the followers of Tantra might be reckoned by the hundreds of thousands, and that the life of many an Indo-Aryan (he might have said, in one way or another, practically all) was that of "bondage to its ordinances." As a Yuga Śāstra, the Tantra claims to govern all orthodox communities of worshippers in the Kaliyuga. But this does not mean that all its provisions are applicable to each one of them. The contrary is the case. There are some matters, such as Mantratattva, which are of common applicability to all such communities. There are other matters which are peculiar to, and govern only, a particular community or section of it. But both the common and special provisions have the same Śāstra as their source. It is, however, not here meant that every practice followed by the orthodox[3] communities is of Tāntrik origin. Some rites, such as that of Homa, have descended from Vaidik times. Others are of modern origin. Thus, to take one instance from amongst others: the Vaiṣnavas sing and dance and recite the name of Hari (Viṣnu) in Kirtans which are of a popular and emotional character. This mode of worship was introduced by the great Chaitanya Deva to meet the needs of his time, and has nothing in common with the formal and intellectual character of the Tāntrik ritual. As to this, the

[1] According to the views (whether historically justifiable or not) of Tantrik Pandits with whom I have discussed this matter, it is not as though there were separate and conflicting Śāstras, but one Śāstra—the Tantra with different sections appropriate to the various divisions in the community of worshippers. So, again, the Purānas constitute one body of Śāstra, though any particular Purāna may appear to give support to a sectarian hypothesis by reason of its emphasizing the cult of some particular Devatā.

[2] "Indian Aryans" (1893). vol. i, p. 404.

[3] I thus exclude all the little sects, some of a very peculiar and original character, with which India abounds, though sometimes loosely affiliated, or claiming to be affiliated, to the larger one; such as, apparently, the Chaliya Pantha of Jodhpur, which Sellon, in his Annotations, calls "Kauchiluas."

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author says:[1] "When Chaitanya Deva deluged all Bengal with huge waves of the name of Hari, he observed that Brāhmana, Kṣatriya, and Vaiśya families were on the verge of ruin. He thought that in the then state of society, full of middle-class (Navaśākha) Śūdras, incompetent for either the Vaidik or Tāntrik dharma, Harinām sangkirtana[2] was the best form of dharma (religion), and consequently he preached that dharma." Though some may nowadays be disposed, through ignorance or other reasons, to dispute their connection with the Śāstra, the matter may be put to some very simple tests. If such a disputant be orthodox (whether Śaiva, Vaiṣnava, or Śākta), he might, if he would answer such a question, be asked whether he has been initiated, and, if so, in what form —what mantra he then received, and where that mantra comes from.[3] And then, when worshipping before an image[4] in Sākāra upāsanā, with the sixteen articles of worship (ṣodaśa upacāra), inquiry may be made as to the authority for such image-worship, and in what Śāstra this ritual and the rules relating to Nyāsa, Bhūtaśuddhi, and so forth, is to be found. The answer in all these and similar cases will be the Tantra. On the other hand, as above stated, certain provisions of the Śāstra may have no applicability to a particular Sādhaka. As the Iṣtadevatā of the various religious communities differs, so in some respects does the pūja and sādhana. The Basil leaf (tulsi) is sacred to Viṣnu; the Bael (bilva) to Śiva; the Scarlet hibiscus or China Rose to the Devī. Whilst animal sacrifice is made to Kālī, it is forbidden in the worship of the aspect of the One which is named Viṣṇu. The use of the rājasika pancattatva is prescribed for Śākta initiates in Vāmācāra. It is forbidden to the Śākta non-initiate, and to

[1] See *post*.

[2] The singing of Viṣnu's (Hari's) name with music and dancing. Among the Vaiṣnavas there is a good deal of worship of a congregational character.

[3] Thus in the Viṣnu mantra "Klīng klīng Gopāla," Klīng is a Tāntrik bīja which is to be found in no other Śāstra but the Tantra. In the same way, in the Kṛṣna mantra, given in the notes (see *post*), Aing and Shrīng are Tāntrik bījas.

[4] I include under this term not merely the image strictly so-called, but also the jar (ghata) in Devī worship, and the lingam and śālagrāma in Śaiva and Vaiṣnava upāsanā, respectively.

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other communities of worshippers. But both the injunctions and the prohibitions have as their authority the same Śāstra,[1] which governs in some way ot other all orthodox communities.

In short, it is considered an error to regard the Tantra as the petty Śāstra of any religious sect only, and a still greater mistake to limit its operation to that which is but one only of its particular methods or divisions of worshippers (ācāras).

As mentioned later, the Tantra deals with all matters of common belief and interest, from the doctrine of the origin of the world to the laws which govern kings and the societies which they have been divinely appointed to rule, medicine and science generally. The Tantra is not only the basis of popular Hindu practice, on which account it is known as the Sādhana Śāstra, but it is the respository of esoteric belief and practices, particularly those relating to yoga and mantra-tattva. Indeed, as regards the last, which is one of the most peculiar, and at the same time most profound, aspects of Hindu teaching, the Tantra is to such an extent the acknowledged repository of this spiritual science that its other name is the Mantra Śāstra. Its claims to such a name could not have been made good were there not some ground for its assertion that it is a Yuga Śāstra for the Kali age. As to which Tantras, however, are authoritative there appear to be differences of opinion, such differences being due either to a mistaken sectarianism, or possibly to real divergences as regards doctrinal thought and historical descent.

The Tantras are referred to as Āgamas. An Indian author[2] and student of the Śaivāgama expresses the opinion that the Āgamas have branched out from the same stem of the Vaidik tree which produced the earlier Upaniṣads, and were at one time as widespread in India as the Upaniṣads themselves; that, like

[1] This is overlooked in the common, though erroneous, appellation—"right hand" and "left hand" worship, used in a sense as if the two had no Śastrik connection with one another. The worship is not "right" and "left" in the sense of "proper" and "improper," orthodox and heterodox. Each is a recognized form of worship, presented by the "Tantra" for differing grades of its Sādhakas. Each has a common authority. Therefore no follower of the Tantra which prescribes these two ācāras thus speaks of them.

[2] Dr. V. V. Ramana Śāstrin, in his Introduction to J. M. Nallaswami Pillai's "Studies in Śaiva Siddhānta".

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the Upaniṣads, the Āgamas also became in course of centuries the basis of a number of "creeds" which, unanimous in accepting the essentials of the Āgamic teaching, were divergent as regards rituals, observances, and minor essential details. He says: "The Āgamas contend that they constitute the truest exegesis of the Vedas, and their origins are certainly as ancient as those of some of the classical Upaniṣads. If the Fire worship be regarded as the ritual inculcated in the Vedas as the outer symbolism of spiritual truths, the temple worship may, on its side, be also said to assume a similar importance in regard to the Āgamas. For the rest, it will be seen that in India at the present day there is hardly a Hindu who does not observe some kind of temple worship or another, which points to the conclusion that the Āgamas have had, in one form or another, an universal hold upon the continent of Hindu India, and that their influence tells." The principles and ritual of Śaivaism are said to be determined by the Āgamas or Tantras, which are twenty-eight in number, from Kāmika to Vatula.

According to some, the Vedas, issued from four out of the five mouths of Śiva and the Tantra of the "higher tradition' (ūrddhvāmnāya) from His central or fifth mouth. The other Tantra is said by some to have proceeded from the current issuing "below the navel"[1] of the Deva. According to another account, all the mouths of Śiva gave issue to those Tantras which spring from the "upward current", and the others are the produce of the downward current" "below the navel".[2] According, however, to both versions a distinction is made between the two classes of tradition. In the Lalitha Sahasranāma, Bhāskararāya, commenting on the Śloka in which the Devī is addressed as Nijājñārūpā Nigama, (the "Nigama are the expression of Thy commands"), says:[3] "Athavā śanti vedānuyāyīni śaivatantrāni kāmikādīnyaṣṭāvingṣaih vedaviruddhāni[4] kāpālabhairavādīni

[1] See *post*.

[2] See as to the meaning of these expressions *post*.

[3] Verse 67.

[4] As to whether the rahasyapūjā of the Tantra is opposed to the Veda, see *post*. In similar fashion Aufrecht (see Adikarmapradipa) says: "Subbagama appellata a via Vedis praescripta non descendunt ideoque samayachara appellantur.

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cha teṣu vaidikāni nigamapadavācyāni parameśvarasya mukhādudbhūtatvādājñārūpāni napunarnābhyadho bhagādutpannāni vedaviruddhānītyarthah." He there, referring to the Devī Bhāgavata and Skanda Purānas, states that there are twenty-eight Śaiva Tantras commencing with Kāmika which adhere to the Vaidik injunctions, as there are others commencing with Kāpāla, Bhairava, etc, (assigned by him to the "downward current"), which do not, and the reference in the Lalitā to Nigama is, according to his views, to the former class. As they sprang from the mouth of Parameśvara, they are said to be the form of the Devī's commands. The five Tantras, commencing with Kāmika sprang from the sadyojāta face of Śiva. From the other four faces— *viz.*, the vāmadeva, aghora, tatpuruṣa, and īśāna— sprang respectively the five Tantras, Dīpta, and others of its class, the five Vijaya and others, the five Vairocana and others, and the eight Tantras Prodgita and others. These tewnty-eight are said to have sprung from the "upward current", and the and the others from the current issuing "below the navel".[1] The Kāmika identifies these twenty-eight Śaiva Tantras or Āgamas with various parts of the body of the Devī, Her ornaments and garments; and all other auxiliary and supplementary Tantras with the hair on Her body. For the body of the great Īśvarī, who is one with Īśvara Her Lord, is contemplated upon under the form of all the Tantras (Sarvatantrarūpā). The same commentator,[2] citing the Kūrma Purāṇa, observes:

" Yāni śātrāni driśyante lokesmin vividhāni tu
Śrutismṛtiviruddhāni dvaitavādaratāni cha
Kāpālang bhairavangchaiva sakalang gautamang matam
Evangvidhāni chānyāni mohanārthāni tani tu
Ye kuśāstrābhiyogena mohayantīva mānavān
Mayā śriṣtāni śāstrāni mehāyaishhāng bhavāntare."

In another place Devī says to Himavat: "Whatsoever Scriptures are found opposed to Śruti and Smṛti devoted to dualism—*viz.*, Kāpāla, Bhairava, Sakala, Gautama, and similar ones—exist

[1] Ūrddhasrotobhavā ete nābhyadhasrotasah parah; the former existing in the chaste (ūrddharetas), whose "stream of life" (retas) tends upwards.
[2] Lalitā, verse 137.

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for the purpose of bewilderment.[1] Those who are confused by false scriptures also confuse the world. These were all created by me for the sake of bewilderment."[2]

In the passage cited from the Lalitā, Bhāskararāya refers to the Śaivāgamas or Śaiva Tantras, and, according to his apparently sectarian view, the other Tantras are those which proceed from "below the navel".

There are, however, what are called Śākta Tantras, and to these the term Tantra is more commonly applied, because in this form they have been perhaps more known and spoken of. According to the view of the author cited, the "Śaivāgamas are not related to the Śākta Tantras by any organic community of thought or descent".[3] Whatever be the historical basis of this conclusion, which is not stated, it is to be noted (for the thought is profound) that in the passage from the Lalitā, though different types of Tantra are said to have sprung from different currents, they are yet both represented as issuing from the body of the God. Śiva is represented as the author of all Āgamas. There is, in fact, but one source whence all forms of religion, as all else, come. If the ray of pure sāttvik light appears to be variously coloured, or even at times clouded or obscured, it is not by reason of the alteration of its nature, but of the disturbing and darkening qualities of the other guṇas constituting the Devī's substance manifesting in the Jīva. It is not without reason that Śiva, the Friend of all, is represented as surrounded by Bhūta and the demoniac hosts. If the Devī, as Vidyā, liberates, by Her Māyā (from which the religious sense no more than any other is free), She also binds. The sectarian, whether a Śaiva or other, naturally discovers abundance of this māyik play in the creed of his neighbour which he condemns. I doubt myself whether there exists at present material for conclusions of any degree of certainty

[1] The Devī is, while the great Liberatrix, also the "all-bewildering" (Sarvamohinī). When devoid of Her grace, men are bewildered by Her Māyā.

[2] Similar language is used as regards the Atheistic School in chap. lxxvii of the Kālikā Purāṇa, which says: "Vāmah kayobrāhma nopi māngsamodyādibhuktaye, kritomayā mohanāya chārvvākādipravarytakah," The reference here is to the nāstika doctrines of Chārvvāka and his followers.

[3] Dr. Ramana Śāstrin, *loc. cit.* See *ante.*

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as to the historical origin of the so-called Śākta Tantras. Certainly no one has yet collected such as may exist. They are, however, I believe, at base (whatever may be the accretions they are said by some to have received) an outcome from the same Vaidik source, the Mother of all Dharma, as the Śaiva Tantras, though, having regard to the difference of ācāra, they may derive from this common source in different form.

That which is commonly regarded as telling against this conclusion is the vīrācāra ritual with the Pancatattva. It is said[1] by a modern Śaivite that the Śaivāgamas prohibit drink and the eating of flesh. Though we may recall both Vaidik usage and the curse of Bhṛgu on those who follow the rites of Bhava: Viṣantu śivadīkṣayām yatra daivam surāsavam;[2] this prohibition is in accordance with the provisions of the "Śākta" Tantras, which limit the ritual use of wine and flesh to the worshippers of Śakti initiate in vāmācāra.

That the provisions of Tantra which relate to the Pancatattva are opposed to the Veda is a notion which is declared by the Indian Tāntrik pandits to be erroneous. Manu says:

" Na māngsabhakṣane doṣo na madye na cha maithune,
Pravrittireṣā bhūtānāng nivrittistu mahāphalā."[3]

"There is no wrong in the eating of meat, nor in the drinking of wine, nor in sexual intercourse; for these things are natural to men. At the same time abstention therefrom is productive of great fruit."

He is doubtless there referring to those enjoyments which belong to the Pravṛtti Mārga—the use of meat and fermented liquor during the Vaidik age being well known. But such use formed also a part of its sacrificial and ritual system. As regards Latāsādhana, the Kālikopaniṣad of the Atharvaveda and other

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[1] Śaiva Siddhānta, 315, *v. ante.*

[2] Bhāgavata Puraṇa, cited in Muir, S.O.T., 377 - 382.

[3] So also the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says: "Eating and sexual union, O Devī, are desired by and natural to men, and their use is regulated for their benefit in the ordinances of Śiva."

" Nrīnāng svabhāvajang devī priyang bhojanamaithunam
Samkṣepāya hitārthāya śaivadharmme nirūpitam."
(Ullāsa ix, verse 283).

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Śāstras are relied on as authorities by Tāntrik Pandits in support of the Vīrācāra ritual. It is unnecessary to deal with this ritual here, as its discussion forms no part of the author's work. Not improbably (in part at least) originating in a doctrine intended for the detached non-dualistic initiate,[1] and kept closely secret,[2] it may have been perverted by the vulgar, to whom some portions of it became later known. The abuses of these commoner people, as time went on, developed such proportions as to ultimately obscure all other matters in the Tantra, thus depriving them of that attention which is their due.

The objections, however, which have been made to the Tāntrik rahasyapūjā have probably been the chief cause of the attack made upon the age and authority of the Śāstra. It would be beyond the limits of a general Introduction such as this to enter at length into this difficult and debated question. As the view which is to be found more commonly stated is adverse to the Śāstra on both these points, it may be shortly pointed out that the Tantra is referred to in works of acknowledged authority such as the Śrīmadbhāgavata, the celebrated Vaiṣṇava Śāstra, the Devī Bhāgavata (which in the ninth skanda speaks of it as a Vedāṅga), and in the Varāha, Padma, Skanda, and other Purāṇas. In the first-named work Bhagavān says: "My worship is of three kinds, Vaidik, Tāntrik, and mixed (miśra)," and in the fifth chapter of the eleventh skanda of the same work it is said that Keśava assumes different forms in the different Yugas, and should be worshipped in different ways, and that in Kaliyuga he is to be worshipped according to the Tantra. The great Śaṅkarācārya recognizes the Śāstra in his Ānanda Laharī and Śāktāmoda, as does Ānanda Tīrtha, the commentator of Pūrṇaprajñadarśana. The Śāstra is frequently quoted in the celebrated work on Smṛti, the Aṣṭāviṃśatitattva of Raghunandana, which

[1] Thus, as regards worship with woman (Latāsādhana), it is said that it is not possible for one who is a dualist devoid of the knowledge of Kula, and addicted to sexual intercourse, to duly follow Śiva's mandate. Hell follows lust. As the Tantrasāra says, "Liṅgayonirato mantrī rauravang narakang brajet" ("The Mantrin addicted to lust goes to the Raurava Hell")—that is, the hell in which the qualities of the fiery tejas tattva exist in painful excess.

[2] Mātriyonivat, as it is said.

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is itself universally accepted as an authority throughout Bengal. In short, as the Veda issued from the mouth of Brahmā, so the Āgama Śāstra is said to have come from that of Sadāśiva.[1] Current objections to the Tantra on the ground that it lacks the authority of Śruti, Smṛti, or Purāṇa, and is of more recent date, are based, according to orthodox views, on a misconception. According to those views, all Śāstras are without beginning and eternal as indeed in one sense they are, though their phenomenal appearance may be successive. Letters or sounds are the sensuous manifestation of words, the essence of which resides in the sphoṭa or conception which existed from all eternity before ever these sounds or words were uttered. The phenomenal appearance of Tantra postdates the other Śāstras in the same sense as that in which the Kaliyuga is said to succeed to the earlier ages of the present Mahāyuga. There is, in fact, but one truth variously presented to the respective ages. So the Tantra has been said to exist in the Veda as the perfume exists in the flower. While the theoretical portion of the Gāyātrī Tattva is contained in the Vedānta, the practical and ritualistic portion is in the Tantra. Both the theoretical exposition and practical application of universal principles varies with the needs of the ages and the Jīva living therein. It is said of the Devī: "Many are the paths which vary according to the Śāstras but all leading to fruition (siddhi) merge in Thee alone, as all rivers merge and are lost in the sea."

For orthodox views on this matter I will here refer the reader to our author and to a recent essay on the "Antiquity of the Tantra," by Mahāmahopādhyāya Jādaveśvara Tarkaratna.[2] The Pandit prefaces the matter by a notice of the views generally entertained by what are called "educated" Indians, which he summarizes as follows: They hold, he tells us, that the Tantras are of recent production; that to the Vaidik age succeeded the Upaniṣadik. Then followed the Paurāṇik age, and then, quite

[1] Some other authorities will be found cited in the later pages of this book; and I summarize in the following pages the opinion of Mahāmahopādhyāya Jādaveśvara Tarkaratna, in his article on the antiquity of Tantra (Tantrer-prāchīnatva) in the Sāhityā Samhita of Assin. 1317.

[2] See preceding note.

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recently, that of the Tantras. But even then the latter Śāstra was not of general authority, having neither governance nor influence in other parts of India than Bengal, where alone it was predominant. There it was created by Bengali Pandits upon the model of the Buddhist teaching and practice of the Mahāyāna sect.[1] These Bengali Pandits are also alleged to have incorporated therewith the worship of Śakti, the goddess of the aboriginal barbarian inhabitants of Bengal. The date of many of the Tantras is said to fall within the last three hundred years, and, amongst other proofs of this, reference is made to the fact that the Yoginī Tantra mentions the name of the founder of the Coochbehar Raj, which was established within that time.

These objections are then classified under four headings: (1) The Tantra is not an ancient Dharma Śāstra of the Āryan race having effect in all parts of India, but was in force in Bengal alone, being, indeed, an invention of the Bengalis, who naturally honoured their own creation. (2) Amongst Mahāyāna Buddhists there is worship of Tārā, Vajrayogini, Kṣetrapāla, and the use of mantras, bījas, and japa, in the cult of such Devatās. There is similar worship in the Tantra, which must therefore be derived from Mahāyāna Buddhism. (3) Aboriginal tribes are worshippers of Śakti, ghosts, snakes, and trees. The Tantras also deal with such worship, and have therefore adopted the worship of such aborigines. (4) A book which relates an incident which took place not more than three hundred years ago cannot itself be older.

To these objections the Mahāmahopādhyāya replies as follows: As to the first, he rejoins that Tāntrik influences are to be found, not only in Bengal, but throughout India. Just as the Bengalis of the higher castes are divided into Śāktas, Vaiṣṇavas, and Śaivas, so it is with the peoples of Kāmarūpa, Mithilā, Utkala, and Kalinga, and the Kāshmirian pandits. The Śakti mantra, Śiva mantra, and Viṣṇu mantra, are each Tāntrik. Amongst Dākṣinātyas,[2] Mahāmahopādhyāyā Subramanya Śāstri, and many others, are Śāktas. The late Mahāmahopādhyāya

[1] See *post*.

[2] Pandits of Southern India.

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Rāma Miśra Śāstri, Mahāmahopādhyāya Rāma Śāstri Bhāgavatācārya, and many others, were and are Vaiṣṇavas. Mahāmahopādhyāya Śivakumāra Śāstri, and a number of others, are Śaivas. In Brindāvan there are many Śākta as well as Vaiṣṇava Brāhmaṇas, though amongst the higher castes in Mahārāṣtra and other Southern Indian countries, Śāivas and Vaiṣṇavas are more numerous than Śāktas. Followers of the Pāśupata and Jangama cults are Śaivas whereas those of Mādhavācārya and Rāmānujācārya are Vaiṣṇavas. Many in the North-west are initiated in the Rāma mantra, which is to be found only in the Tantra. It is still more remarkable that, according to this author, the pandās of Śrī Puruṣottama[1] are all Śāktas, and the priests of Kāmākhyā Devī[2] are all Vaiṣṇavas.

Passing to the second argument, he denies that similarity between two doctrines and practices is necessarily proof that the first is borrowed from the second. It may equally be argued the other way. If, because the Buddhists worship Tārā, Hayagrīva and others with dhyānas and bījas similar to those in the Tantra, it is contended that the latter is derived from the former, it may equally well be urged that such Buddhist worship is taken from the Tantra. If the Hindu mind was moved by and drawn to the touching teachings of Buddhism, why, he asks, should it concern itself with the externals, and not with the fundamental principles of the religion to which it is so attracted? Why should the Hindu, instead of striving for Nirvāṇa, stand before Buddhist images, fashioned after Buddhistic models, and with folded palms pray for beauty, victory, glory, and the destruction of foes? There is obviously a great difference between yoga undertaken for the extinction of all desires, and such prayers to the Deity for wealth and the destruction of foes, as form part of the Vaidik religion. The Bhagavadgītā preaches niṣkāma karma,[3] which, with the pursuit of spiritual knowledge leads to the acquisition of such knowledge, and thereafter to Nirvāṇa; and on this account the "educated" say that the Gītā is influenced by Buddhis-

[1] Jagannātha at Puri.
[2] At Kamrup in Assam, a great Tāntrika centre.
[3] The performance of work selflessly, without desire for its fruit.

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tic ideals. In the Tantra there is performance of work with desire, which is contrary to Buddhist teaching. Hinduism alone, of all religions, provides different forms of religious teaching for persons of differing religious competence (adhikāra). Buddhism does not. How, otherwise, is it possible to account for Buddhadeva's vairāgya,[1] his loss of faith in Hinduism, and his discovery of the new path whereby man shall escape the infirmities of old age and death? Buddhism, out of pity for all living creatures, forbids the sacrifice of animals. It is, he thinks, an astonishing proposition that Tāntrikas followed such a religion, when at the same time they are supposed to have invented a novel Śāstra, enjoining the sacrifice of goats, buffaloes, and other animals, before images of Devas and Devīs, also drawn from Buddhism. While it is not to be expected that all will understand the complexities of Buddhist philosophy, pity is a virtue which goes with humble minds. If there be anything which might prove attractive in Buddhism to men in general it is its prohibition against the slaughter of animals—an ordinance which melted the hearts of a large number of the Hindus and made them Buddhists. It is scarcely probable, then, that Hinduism should omit that which is fundamentally attractive in a religion which (in his view) denies the existence of God, and should inaugurate a new Śāstra (the Tantra) providing for the worship of Devas and Devīs, according to the tenets of the Buddhist Mahāyāna school. It is modern Vaiṣṇavism, on the contrary, which, in its prohibition of animal sacrifice, is inspired by the Buddhistic principle that "cessation from the killing of animals is the highest form of religion". In the great yajña, which lasted a hundred years, Śaunaka and other Ṛṣis used to listen to the Śrīmad Bhāgavata from the mouth of Sūta, and at the same time to sacrifice animals.[2] In the Aśvameda yajña which King Yudiṣthira, the disciple of Kṛṣṇa, performed under the guidance of Śri Kṛṣṇa himself, a horse was killed, offered to Devas, and eaten. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself hunted a boar under the command of Vāsudeva for the satisfaction of the Pitṛs in Śrāddha. The eleventh skanda

[1] Dispassion.

[2] Skanda I.

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of the Bhāgavata[1] explicitly states that the killing of animals in sacrifice is no killing.

Amongst the Vaiśyas of Mathurā, many had become Buddhists, and others Jains. Greatly moved as they were at the sight of Chaitanya's love for Kṛṣṇa, and drawn thereby to Hinduism, they yet hesitated to return to it on the ground that it sanctioned the slaughter of animals in sacrifice. It was perhaps at that time that the Vaiṣṇava teachers announced that the killing of animals was not sanctioned by their tenets, and thus succeeded in converting Buddhists and Jains to their faith. It is probably from this time that Vaiṣṇava families abandoned animal sacrifice on occasions of pūjā. Although common Vaiṣṇavas eat fish, the flesh of other animals is forbidden. In Bengal, Utkala, and other countries, Buddhist teachers adapted from Hinduism the establishment of images of Devas, the worship of such Devas with mantras and bījas, and called themselves Mahāyāna Buddhists—a sect which, of course, came into existence long after the passing away of the Buddha. The Lalitavistāra,[2] or biography of Śākyasingha, states that he had a special knowledge of Nigama, Purāṇas, Itihāsa, and the Vedas. Whenever both Veda and Nigama are mentioned in the same passage, the latter term refers to Tantra, which goes by the names of Āgama and Nigama.[3]

Again, Śākyasingha is made to say to the Bhikṣukas,[4] "Such fools seek the protection of, and pay obeisance to, Brahmā, Indra, Rudra, Viṣṇu, the Devī, Kārtikeya, Mother Kātyāyanī, Gaṇapati, and others. Some perform tapasyā in cremation grounds, and at the crossing of four roads."[5] Speaking of the practice of heretics (pāṣānḍas), Śākyasingha mentions the use of wine and flesh. Had not the Tāntrik form of worship been then in existence how could he have known and spoken ill of it?[6] Seeing, also, what the Lalitavistāra says, can it, he asks, be contended that the Tantra is derived from Mahāyāna Buddhism?

[1] XI, Chapter v, śloka xiii. [2] Chapter xii. [3] *Vide ante.*
[4] Buddhist Sannyāsis. [5] Lalitavistāra, chap. xvii.
[6] This, of course, does not necessarily follow. All that is here proved is that Tāntrik practices antedated the Lalutavistāra, whatever be the date at which the latter was written. From the standpoint of Western criticism this and all similar orthodox arguments are weakened by the too ready credit sometimes given to the age and authority of the literary materials on which they rest.

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To the third objection the Mahāmahopādhyāya answers that the views there expressed are similar to those given under the second heading, and the rejoinder, therefore, is similar. It may, however, he says, be asked who are meant when the barbarian aborigines of India are spoken of. According to the English, such aborigines were Dravidians, Odras, and Paundrakas. Is it, he says, to be supposed that Bengali Pandits composed the Tantra Śāstra in imitation of the practices of Dravidians inhabiting the distant Deccan? Or was the Tāntrik system adopted from Mundas, Santhās, Garos, Meches, Kuches, Khasias and other primitive inhabitants of Assam?[1] The Pandit hesitates "to lay this heavy burden of ignominy on the heads of Bengali Pandits" seeing that the Śakti Devatā is established and worshipped in all parts of India. Thus Kāmākhyā is worshipped at Kāmarūpa, Vindhyavāsinī on the Vindhya Hills, Yogamāyā and Paurṇamāsī at Brindāvan; Annapūrnā, Sankata, Tripurabhairavī, sixty-four Yoginīs, Kālabhairavī, Durgā, Ṣītalā, Mangalā, and other Devīs at Kāśi; Kuṣalī at Kauṣalī; Pārvatī on the Sahya Hills, Poona; Guhyeśvarī in Nepal; Gāyatrī and Sāvitrī in Rājputāna; Lalitā at Prayāga; Ugratārā at Tirhut; Māyādevī at Haridvāra;[2] Chandī on the Chandi Hills near Haridvāra; Jvālāmukhī at Jalandhara;[3] Cinnamasta, some forty miles therefrom; Kālī (whom King Prithvī worshipped) seven miles to the south of Delhi; Mumbā in Bombay city; Mahālakṣmī, on the sea coast near Bombay; Kālikā on the Harsha Island, west of and near Mahākāleśvara; Kṣīrabhavānī near Kāshmīr; and Devī Mīnākṣī, south of Madras.[4] All these Devīs (to which many others might be added) are still worshipped, and were established in their various places in distant and unknown ages. Even at the seat of Puruṣottama in Utkala,[5] Vimalā is worshipped, so also are Sarasvatī, Bhuvaneshvarī, Kālī, and Lakśmī. Obeisance is made to Subhadrā[6] with the mantra: "Kātyāyanī,

[1] The Pandit's reply, of course, takes benefit from the folly of the statement he answers.
[2] After whom the place (Hardwar) is called Māyapurī in the Śāstra.
[3] Where fire is said to ever burn to consume the offerings.
[4] The Devī at Madura.
[5] The temple of Jagannatha (Viṣṇu) at Puri, Orissa.
[6] Sister of Jagannātha.

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salutation to Thee." Bhuvaneśvarī is worshipped at Bhubaneśvara; Dhavaleśvarī at Dhavaleśvara; eight Śaktis, Virajā, Indrānī at Yājpur, and Katakachandī at Cuttack.

If it be argued that the Tantra Śāstra is of recent origin because it provides for the worship of Śakti, then the same observation must apply to the Purāṇas, Mahābhārata, and even the Vedas and Upaniṣads. The Mahābhārata contains hymns in honour of the Devī. The Śrimadbhāgavata provides for the worship of Umā. The maidens of Vraja worshipped Kātyāyānī. The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa relates the greatness of Devī. In the Purāṇas Her greatness is sung. Numerous passages in proof of this may be culled from the Skanda, Brahma, Brahmavaivarta, Bhaviṣya, Padma, Devī, and Kālikā Purāṇas. The autumnal Durgā Pūjā is mentioned in many Purāṇas. It is an error to suppose that Raghunandana Bhattāchārya alone has prescribed for the worship of Durgā. Previous to him many others had done so, such as Śrīdatta, Harinātha, Vidyādhara, Ratnākara, Bhojadeva, Jimūtavāhana, Halāyudha, Rāyamukuṭa, Vācaspati Miśra and many other renowned compilers. Many well-known books written before the age of Raghunandana contain provisions for Durgā Pūjā, such as the Durgābhaktitaraṇginī, Samvatsarapradīpa, Kālakaumudī, Jyotiṣārnava, Smṛtisāgara, Kalpataru, Krityamahārnava, Krityaratnākara, Kāmanipūjānibandha, Krityatattvārnava, Chakrānārāyaṇi, Kriyāyogopasamvāra, Durgābhaktiprakāśa, Dākṣinātya, Kālanirnaya and Pūjāratnākara.

Although the Bengali practice of worshipping earthen images of Durgā with great pomp is not followed in all parts of India, yet She is everywhere worshipped in Ghatas (jars). Shrines which contain Her images are visited; nine-day vratas are made, fasts observed, and the Chandī read on the Mahāṣtamī day. Even now the women of Vraja in Brindāvan bathe in the Jumna early every morning for the first nine days of the bright fortnight of the month of Āśvina, and worship images of the Devī, which they draw on the banks of the river. Readers of the Chāndogya, Talavakāra and other Upaniṣads are aware of the incident in which Umā, the Daughter of the Mountain, riding a lion in a

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blaze of light, appeared to Indra and the other Devas in order to prove that it was not by their śakti that they lived and moved, but that all which was done was so done by virtue of that Mahāśakti. In the Veda there is the Sarasvatī sūkta, in the Yajurveda the Lakṣmī sūkta, and in the tenth Maṇḍala of the Ṛgveda the Devī sūkta. Even the worship of Devi Manasā is based, not on the Tantra, but Purāṇa. And the same may be said as regards the worship of the Tulsī plant, and the Bael and Aśvattha tree.[1] Far distant from Bengal, on the summit of Mount Govarddhana, there is an image of Devī Manasā. And in the land of Vraja, where animal sacrifice is condemned, goats are sacrificed before this Devī. Snake worship exists in other countries than Bengal, and was not introduced by the Tantra Śāstra. A survey of the religious practices prevalent in ancient times and in other countries does not support the conclusion that because the Tantra advocates Śakti worship it is therefore of recent origin.

Passing to the fourth heading, the Pandit asks how it is that, if the Yoginī Tantra is at most only three hundred years old, Raghunandana Bhattāchārya, the great Smārta, and Kṛṣṇānanda Bhattāchārya, contemporaries of Śrī Chaitanya, referred to and quoted it as an authority in the Smṛtitattva and Tantrasāra. On the other hand, it is common knowledge that if in some obscure family a great person (mahāpuruṣa), or a succession of great persons, is born, their descendants and disciples name the members of that family after those of some other wellknown family, so as to create the notion that the two families are the same. It was perhaps in this way he surmises that the Rāj family of Cooch Behār was raised to the position of being the descendants of Śiva mentioned in the Yogini Tantra.

Mādhavācārya, the commentator upon the Vedas, has, in dealing with the Pātañjala Darśana in his compilation of the six Darśanas, quoted many passages from the Tantra Śāstra with reference to the ten forms of Śamskāras prescribed therein. Vācaspati Miśra, the commentator upon the six Darśanas, has,

[1] The Tulsī and Aśvattha are worshipped, and bael leaves are offered to Śiva. Aśvattharupobhagavān viṣṇureva na samśayah rudrarūpovaṭastadvat palāśo brahmarūpadhrik. Padma Purāṇa, Uttara Khānda, ch. clx.

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in his commentary on the Pātañjala Darśana, recommended dhyāna of Devatās as prescribed in the Tantras. Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya, also, has, in the Śārīraka Bhāṣya, made mention of the Tāntrik Ṣatcakra. It is hardly necessary to say that none of these three great men—Śaṅkarācārya, Mādhavācārya, and Vācaspati Miśra,—was a Bengali. Before the compilation of Kṛṣṇānanda's Tantrasāra, there were many compilers of Tantra, such as Rāghavānanda, Rāghavabhatta, Virūpākṣa, and Govindabhatta. In his observations upon the Yantra of Nīlasarasvatī, in his Tantrasāra, Kṛṣṇānanda, observes: "Said by even Śrī Śaṅkarācārya." The famous Śakti Ṣtotra,[1] named Ānandalaharī (wave of bliss),[2] is everywhere known to be the work of Śaṅkarācārya, and is, as such, universally recited by devotees before Devatās with feeling and reverence. Compilations of Tantra, such as the Rāmārcana Candrikā,[3] the Mantramuktāvalī, the Sārasamgraha, the Bhuvaneśvarīpārijāta, the Sāradātilaka, the Trīpurāsārasamuchchaya, the Svachchandasangraha, the Sārasamuchchaya, the Mantratantraprakāśa, and the Somabhujangāvalī, were prepared long before the time of Kṛṣṇānanda and Raghunandana. References to these books are to be found in the works of Kṛṣṇānanda and Raghunandana. In the well-known astronomical work called Dīpika, days for taking Dīkṣā (initiation) have been determined separately from those for commencement of education and investiture with the sacred thread (upanayana). That Dīkṣā must, therefore, be Tāntrik Dīkṣā, distinct from Vaidik Dīkṣa or Upanayana. Compilations come into existence long after the preparation of original works and when capacity for their production has ceased. It is when ordinary folk find difficulty in establishing a concordance between the ordinances contained in numerous—original and other works—that the learned undertake the making of compilations for the determination of the right forms of religious

[1] Hymn to Śakti.

[2] See Arthur and Ellen Avalon's "*Hymns to the Goddess*" for this and other Hymns to the Devī.

[3] Passages compiled in the Rāmārchana Chandrikā have been quoted by Vācaspati Miśra in the chapter on Vāsantī Pūjā in his Krityacintāmani. This supports the antiquity of Rāmārchana Chandrikā.

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practice, the regulation of objections against the Śāstra, the establishment of a concordance between apparently conflicting authorities and the settlement of all disputed matters. A period of at least a thousand years must, in this author's opinion, be considered to have elapsed between the date of original works and that of compilations. Many of the compilers whose names have been mentioned lived a thousand years ago. There is therefore no ground, in the Pandit's opinion, for doubting that the Tantra Śāstra is at least two thousand years old. In the eleventh skanda of the Śrīmadbhāgavata it is said that Keśava (Viṣṇu) should be worshipped in the manner prescribed in the Tantra Śāstra;[1] and, again, that men desirous of acquiring jñāna (spiritual knowledge) should worship Bhagavān according to Vaidik and Tāntrik ordinances.[2] The same book in the same skanda also says: "Hear how people should worship Me in the Kali age according to various Tantras.[3] They should observe my Yātrās (Dolayātrā, Rathayātrā, etc.), perform sacrifices, be initiated in the Vaidik and Tāntrik modes, and undertake to perform tha vrata in which I am worshipped."

In the Brahma Purāṇa it is said that people should enter into the temple of Bhuvaneśvara in the Garden of a single mango Tree,[4] and there worship Mahādeva according to Vaidik and Tāntrik rites. This passage has been quoted by Raghunandana in his Puruṣottamatattva. The Kūrma Purāṇa says: "There are found in the world many Śāstras antagonistic to Śruti and Smṛti. The ordinances of such Śāstras are tāmasik.[5] Karāla, Bhairava, Yāmala, and similar other books follow Vāmamārga,"[6] and so on. This passage, which is also contained in the Kūrma Purāṇa, has been quoted by Raghunandana and other compilers. The Pandit points out that Karāla, Bhairava, and Yāmala are Tāntrik works, and that the Vāmamārga is a mode of Tāntrik worship. In the Rāmāyana there are references to Balā and

[1] Chapter iii, ślokes 47 and 48. See Śrīdhara Svāmī's note.
[2] Chapter v, śloka 28. Śrīdhara Svāmī's note.
[3] Chapter v, śloka 31. Śrīdhara Svāmī's note.
[4] The town of Bhuvaneśvara.
[5] That is, the outcome of a state in which the tamoguṇa predominates.
[6] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

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Atibalā,[1] which are Tāntrik, and the mode of acquiring which is given in the Tantrasāra. Rāghava Bhatta and Raghunandana quote Nārada as to the nature of the Tāntrik mode of worship for persons in impure conditions. In the Parāśara Bhāṣya there is a quotation said to have been originally made by Govinda-bhatta, which says that mantras with Om should not be taught to Śūdras, and so on. In Bhojarāja's Vyavahārasamuchchaya there is reference to a passage stating that Upanayana and Dīkṣā should not be performed whilst Brihaspati[2] is in Rāhu.[3] The Varāha says that learned men should worship Janārdana either according to the Vedas or according to the Tantras. The Padma Purāṇa, in its Uttarakhānda, asks how it is possible that one may become bhāgavata[4] without taking dīkṣā in the Vaiṣṇavī cult? In the third chapter of the Nārada Pancarātra it is said that whilst meditating on the six Cakras named Mūlādhāra, Svādhiṣṭhāna, Manipūra, Anāhata, Viśuddha, Ājñā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa was seen in the thousand petalled lotus, resplendent, of the colour of a freshly-formed cloud, wearing yellow silk, two-armed, beautiful, pure, and smiling, in the company of his own Śakti, Kundalinī. Again, in the fourth chapter of the same book, the author uses the terminology of the Tantra Śāstra when he says, "Lakṣmīrmāyā Kāmabījam," etc.,[5] and thus introduces the great mantra of Śri Kṛṣṇa, consisting of bījas, and formed of eight syllables. All are aware that the piercing of the six Cakras, their names, and the Devī Kundalinī are matters of the Tantra Śāstra. There are references to Tāntrik prāṇāyāmā in the Pātañjala Darśana and in the Bhagavadgītā, and other places of the Mahābhārata.[6] It should also be pointed out here that there is indirect, though not direct, reference to the Tantra Śāstra in Yudhiṣṭhira's question to Bhīṣma contained in the 7th, 8th, and 9th ślokas of the 259th chapter in the Śānti Parva of the Mahābhārata, dealing with Mokṣadharma. These ślokas may be translated as follows:

[1] Bālakānda, canto xxii, ślokas 12, 13, and 15. These are Vidyās taught by Visvāmitrā to Rāma and Lakṣmana.

[2] The planet Jupiter.

[3] The ascending node.

[4] Devoted to Bhagavān.

[5] Lakṣmī, Māyā and Kāma Bījas.

[6] Shānti Parva, chap. cci, ślokas 17 and 19, with Nīlakantha's note.

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"I have heard that Vaidik ordinances are gradually coming into disuse, in the progress of ages. There is one form of dharma for the Satya age, another, for the Tretā age, another for the Dvāpara age, and another again for the Kali age. The Vedas contemplate different forms of dharma according to different capacities of men. The words of the Vedas are true, and from these words, again have emanated all-embracing Vedas," and so forth. Now, here it may be asked, what are these all-embracing Vedas which have emanated from the Vedas? In the Mahāmahopadhyāya's opinion no other reply is possible but that the Tantras are here referred to. Smṛtis also, like the Vedas, do not give to all castes equal adhikāra (right) to them, and prohibit their study to Śūdras. The "all embracing Vedas," therefore, cannot mean Smṛtis. The Tantras give adhikāra to people belonging to all castes, so that they alone are "all embracing". Moreover, there is no instance of the word Veda being used in the sense of Smṛti. There is, however, ample use of the terms Āgama and Nigama in the sense of the Tantras—terms which originally meant the Vedas. Just as, according to the Śāstra, the Vedās have no author, but are merely remembered by fourheaded Brahmā, so the Tantras also have not, according to the Śāstra, any author, but have merely emanated from the mouths of Śiva. Neither the Vedas nor the Tantras have emanated from the mouths of munis, ṛṣis, or the spiritually wise (jñānī). Brahmā is Īśvara and Śiva also is Īśvara, and the Śāstra says that the Vedas emanate from the mouths of the former, and the Tantras have issued from those of the latter. More explicit are the ślokas 121, 122, 123, and 124 of chapter ccxxciv in the Śānti Parva of the Mahābhārata dealing with Mokṣadharma. Here Mahādeva says to Dakṣa: "Extracting from the Vedas complete with their six angas (limbs), and from the Sāṃkhya-Yoga, I promulgated the Pāśupata vrata with such austere and extensive tapas as no Deva, or Dānava could perform. This vrata is superior to all practices ordained in the Vedas and other Śastras, all-good, beneficial to all castes and āśramas,[1] everlasting, performed in three years and ten

[1] It is open to all, which the Veda is not.

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days,[1] secret, highly spoken of by wise men, spoken ill of by fools; opposed (viparītam) in some matters to Varṇāśramadharma,[2] though in many others similar thereto; prescribed by learned men; practised by men who have risen superior to Āśramas,[3] and beneficial. Dakṣa, you will obtain all the fruits of such Pāśupata vrata," and so forth. To what Śāstra, the Pandit asks, other than the Tantra Śāstra, can this Pāśupata vrata belong? It cannot be the Vedas, for the vrata is said to have been extracted from them. Again, the reader will, he thinks, be astonished to know that the Mahābhārata has adopted the Tāntrik terminology and Tāntrik methods in the introduction of mantras. In the 74th śloka of chapter ccxxciv of the Śānti Parva referred to above, the following mantra occurs:

"Ghantī charu chelī milī brahma kāyikamagnīnām."[4]

Nīlakantha explains this mantra as follows:

"Ghantī = Om. The word 'Rudra' must be introduced. Agnīnām kāyikam = the wife of Fire, or Svāhā; Brahma = Om.

[1] Quaere. The text I have before me runs: Abdair daśārdha sangyuktam, which according to Nīlakantha, means that it may be acquired in years or shortly by the merit of those who practise the five yamas and five niyamas. Some read "daśāha" (ten days) for "daśārdha." There seems to be no reason for limiting the period of the vrata thus.

[2] Thus there is no caste in the cakra; the smārtha vratas, such as fasting, are not generally observed; pūja in Vāmācāra is done at night and other matters.

[3] Paramahamsas, Parivrājakas, etc.

[4] The full verse is—

" Ghanto'ghanto ghatī ghantī charu chelī milī milī
Brahma kāyikamagnīnāng dandimundastridandadhrik."

The meaning of which is as follows: Ghantah = prakāśavān, or shining—that is, Pūrṇabrahmasvarūpah. Aghantah = Māyāvritatvena prachachhanna-prakāśa—*viz.*, that whose shining is concealed on account of its being covered with mayā or jīva. Gathī = he who gatayati (joins) men with the fruit of their karma, or who attaches fruit to the karma of men. Ghanti = ghantavān, or possessor of ghantah (*q.v.*) Charu = those who move (charanti)—that is, jīvas, movable and immovable men, animals, trees, etc. Chelī = player; as men play with birds, so Śiva plays with us. Milī—one who has mila (attachment). Śiva as the cause is attached to, or, as we should say, in, all effects. The word is mentioned twice for emphasis. Brahma = Praṇava. Kāyikamagnīnām = the spouse of Fire, or Svāhā. Dandimunda = ascetics, paramahamsas, etc. Tridandadhrik = holding the three staffs of bael, palāśa and bamboo, as is done in Upanayana. These staffs are thrown into the Ganges on the twelfth day following Upanayana. Śiva is thus Purṇabrahman; Jīva; the Giver of the fruit of Karma; the all brilliant One; all moving Jīvas: He who plays with Jīva; who as all Causes is in all effects; Praṇava; and Svāhā; the ascetic and Gṛhastha life.

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Thus the following mantra, containing eighteen syllables, has been here quoted: Om Rudra chelī chelī chelī chelī milī milī Om Svāhā."[1] In the 379th śloka of chapter xiv of the Anuśāsana Parva, Śrī Kṛṣṇa says to Yudhiṣṭira: "Eight days passed as though they were but a moment, and I took mantra from that Brāhmaṇa (Upamanyu)." After this verse it is narrated how Śrī Kṛṣṇā performed austere tapasyā in the worship of Śiva by repeating this mantra: how Śiva, being pleased, appeared before him in the company of Uma: how the hymn sung by Śri Kṛṣṇa pleased Śiva and Umā, so that they granted him blessings and so forth. One is therefore astonished to hear some educated persons say that nowhere in the Mahābhārata is there any mention of Śakti save in the Virāṭa Parva, where Yudhiṣṭhira hymns Durgā. In the story of Dakṣa's yajña, related in the Mahābhārata, there is no mention of the death of Dakṣa's daughter,[2] but it is said that Bhadrakālī rose out of Her body for the destruction of the yajña,[3] and that pleased by the hymn sung by Dakṣa, Durgā appeared with Mahādeva before him, and then disappeared. Amongst the thousand names spoken of by Kṛṣṇa in the Anuśāsana Parva there appear "Vāmadeva, and Vāma, and Prāk, and Dakṣiṇa, and Vāmana," and "author of the Vedas and author of Mantras." Mantras here cannot be said to refer to Vaidik mantras owing to the distinction made between the author of the Vedas and the author of mantras, and Nīlakaṇṭha, the commentator, in fact, explains mantras as Tāntrik mantras. By Vāma and Dakṣiṇa are meant (the Pandit thinks) the vāma and the dakṣiṇa ācāras in Tantra. Tāntrik Bīja mantras are known to many. In the Anuśāsana Parva also, where mokṣadharma is treated of, it is said: "Four-mouthed Mahāliṅga and Cāruliṅga etc., ruler of bījas,". author of bījas, and so forth. There are even more explicit references to the Tantra Śāstra in the Mahābhārata. For instance, it is said, "O Rājaṛṣi:[4] the Sāṅkhya Yoga, the Pancarātra, the Vedas,

[1] This is according to the Gauras who say that Ghantī=Om; and insert Rudra in the vocative case, and repeat chelī four times.

[2] Satī.

[3] Śānti Parva, chapter ccxxciv, ślokas 32 and 54

[4] Ṛṣi and King.

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and the Pāśupata, know these Śāstras, the purpose of which is to establish jñāna," and, again: "Śrīkaṇṭha Śiva, husband of Umā and lord of all things, promulgated the Pāśupata Jñāna-śāstra when in placid mood. Bhagavān Himself is the Knower of the entire Pancarātra."[1] Sanskrit scholars in India, according to the Pandit, believe the Pancarātra to be a Tantra. Again, the injunction that in the Kali age people should worship Īśvara in the manner prescribed in the Tantra Śāstra leads many people to think that the Tantras are recent because they are intended for the Kali age. The Pandit replies that the Mahābhārata itself answers this view in the Śānti Parva, where it is said that in the Satya age Rudra, engrossed in Yoga, told the Tantra Śāstra to Bālakhilya[2] Ṛṣis; but that subsequently it again disappeared through the māyā of that Deva.[3] In the 17th śloka of Chapter cclxvii[4] of the Śānti Parva, Maharṣi Kapila questions Syūmaraśmi as follows: "Tell me if you have seen any Śāstra other than Āgama." In reply Syūmaraśmi speaks of many things, and at the end of each statement he remarks: "This is Śruti." The Pandit then asks what is meant by the word Āgama in Maharṣi Kapila's question. In his Commentary on the Śārīraka Sūtra, "owing to the impossibility of generation," BhagavānŚaṅkarācārya refers to the fourfold division of Vāsudeva, Śankarṣana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha[5] as stated in the Pancarātra, and whilst he does not attempt to disprove it, he does disprove the theory of the generation of Sankarṣana from Vāsudeva advanced by the followers of the Pancarātra. Again, in his Commentary on the Sūtra: "The Lord cannot be merely the instrumental cause on account of the existence of diversity in creation," he writes: "Māheśvaras, too, admit it," "All this

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[2] Śānti Parva, chap, ccc. ixl, ślokas 64 to 68.

[3] Small Ṛṣis the size of a thumb (anguṣṭha), 60,000 in number. Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa says they are children of the wife of Kratu and Ūrdharetas. It is believed that they still appear and bathe on Pauṣa Śankrānti Day at Gangāsāgara.

[4] Śanti Parva, chap. ccc.xl.viii, see ślokas 17 and 18 . The reference should be to chap. 349.

[5] This should be chap. ccl.xviii.

[6] Vāsudeva = Paramātmā; Śankarṣana = Jīva; Pradyumna = Manas; Aniruddha = Ahaṅkāra.

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was taught by Paśupati, who is Īśvara, for undoing the bonds of paśus," etc. In his Śrībhāṣya on the first Sūtra quoted above, Rāmānuja Svāmī writes, "Elucidated by Nārāyaṇa Himself in the Pancarātra Tantra, and, again, "Non-Vedic practices are opposed, and not the cults of Yoga and Paśupati; for Sāṅkhya, Yoga, Pancarātra, the Vedas and Pāśupata, are self-evident, and cannot be disproved by reasoning," and so forth. Rāmānuja Svāmī quotes as evidence all the passages of the Mahābhārata above mentioned, as well as many other passages from the same epic, and other works. There is a scripture named Sūtasaṃhitā, of which the Brahmagītā is a portion. Its speaker is Brahmā, and throughout it deals with Śaṅkara. Its annotator is Mādhavācārya himself, the writer on all Darśanas, and Commentator of the Vedas. At the end of every Chapter he writes: "By Mādhavācārya, an inhabitant of Kāśī, a devotee of the Śakti of action, a server of the lotus-feet of the three-eyed Deva and illuminator of the path of Upaniṣad." Here Mādhavācārya calls himself a devotee of the Śakti of work (Kriyāśakti), but the Tantra alone deals with Śakti of will, Śakti of knowledge, and Śakti of action. Not only in the Mahābhārata, but in all Purāṇas the greatness of the Devī as extrolled in the Tantras, has been described either shortly or with elaboration. In the account of the greatness of Rudra contained in the Varāha Purāṇa it is said: "Śaṅkara has as many aspects as there are Mahāśaktis. He who worships Her ever worships Him as husband." Again: "If he who worships the Devīs pleases Rudra also these Devīs become for ever siddha to that Mantrin. There is no doubt of this:" [1] What is there in the Tantras, it is asked, more than what this verse says? In the Śaṅkara-Saṃhitā, which forms a part of the Skanda Purāṇa, the Ṛṣis ask Sūta, "Bhagavān, we desire to hear of the system of Vīramaheśvara," and so forth. And Kārtikeya says to Mahādeva: "There are few who know Śaiva-Āgama." Śaṅkara, in His reply, says: "The essence of the Vedas, the Āgama, and the Purāṇas charms the mind and should be kept secret." [2] According to the Mahāmahopādhyāya, Śaiva-Āgama

[1] Varāha Purāṇa, chap. xxci.

[2] Chapter xxc.

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undoubtedly means the Tantra-śāstra,[1] as does the word Āgama in the expression "the Vedas, the Āgama, and the Purāṇas," because it is mentioned separately from the Vedas. There are many Upaniṣaḍs other than the ten on which Śaṅkarācārya wrote his Commentary. He selected these ten because they supported his monistic theories. Just as there was no necessity to write a Commentary on the Vedas, so it was not necessary that he should write commentaries on the Upaniṣads which dealt with the methods of worship (upāsanā). The Akṣamālikā Upaniṣaḍ enumerates the substances which should be used for the rosary with which japa[2] is done. They are coral, pearl, crystal, conch, silver, gold, sandalwood, putrajīvikā, lotus-seed, and rudrākṣa. The Tantra Śāstra mentions exactly the same substances. There are many Upaniṣads of the Atharva Veda, such as Atharvaśikhā, Atharvaśirah, Advayatāraka, Adhyātma, Annapūrṇa, Amṛtanāda, Amṛtabindu, Avyakta, Kṛṣṇa, Kaula, Kṣurikā, Gaṇapati, Kātyāyana, Kālāgnirudra, Kuṇḍikā, Tripurātāpanīya, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, Devīdvaya, Dhyānabindu, Nādabindu, Nārada, Nārāyaṇa, Nirvāṇa, Nṛsiṃha-tāpanīya, Pāśupata, Brahma-paingala, Paippalāda, Vahvricha, Vṛñajjāvāla, Bhasma, Muktikā, Rahasya, Rāma-tāpani, Vajra-pañjara, Varāha, Vāsudeva, Sarasvatī-rahasya, Sītā, Sudarśana, Hayagrīva, etc.[3] As there are 21 recensions of the Ṛgveda, 109 of the Yajurveda, and 1,000 of the Sāmaveda, so there are the same number of Upaniṣads belonging to each of the Vedas respectively. The Sanskrit-knowing reader will have surmised from the name of the Upaniṣads above enumerated that each of them deals with forms of worship similar to that prescribed by the Tantra. There are many commentaries on the Nṛsiṃhatāpanīya Upaniṣad, one of which is written by Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya and another by his great guru Gauḍapādācārya, known by the name of Munīndra. There is, therefore, no ground, it is contenced, for the supposition that this Upanisad may be a spurious one. Kulluka Bhatta, the author of the most authoritative commentary

[1] *Vide ante.* [2] See *Introduction to Tantra Śastra.*

[3] Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit MSS. in the Government Oriental MSS. Library, Madras, vol. i, part iii.

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on the Manu Saṃhitā, has, in his note on the first śloka of Chapter (ii) of the book quoted a passage from Hārita's work which says: "Now we shall explain dharma. Dharma is based on the authority of Śruti. Śruti is of two kinds—Vaidik and Tāntrik." From this it is evident that the Tantra Śāstra is nothing else than a part of the Vedas, and is, consequently, known by the names of Āgama and Nigama. The passages above quoted from the Mahābhārata prove that Mahādeva first promulgated the Vedas, and then the Pāśupata dharma from a part of it. Thus, from the statement also made by Mahādeva Himself, we learn that the Tantra Śāstra is a part of the Vedas.

According to the Pandit, the Tantra Śāstra is referred to by the word "rahasya" (mystery), used over and above the expression "All the Vedas," in the 165th śloka of chapter ii of the Manu Saṃhitā, and also by the word "vidya", which is used in addition to the Vedas and the Upaniṣads in the 10th sūkta of the 4th Brāhmaṇa in the 2nd varga of the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad. The Vriddhahārītasaṃhitā contains a full account of the Tāntrik form of initiation (dīkṣā). The Uṣanahsaṃhitā makes clear references to the Pancarātra and the Pāśupata dharma. The Kātyāyana Saṃhitā ordains worship of Ganeśa, Gaurī and other Devas and Devīs. The Vyāsa Saṃhitā recommends japa of the guhyavidyā,[1] use of rosaries, with beads of crystal and the like, and worship of Rudra with Gāyatrī. Nowhere else but in the Tantra Śāstra is there a Gāyatrī for Rudra or any other Devatā. The Śaṅgkha Saṃhitā says that after dhyāna of a Devatā, japa should be made with a rosary of crystals of other beads, the number of recitations being recorded by the fingers of the left hand. In the Vriddhagautama-saṃhitā there is a list of the names of the authors of Dharma Śāstras. In this list there occur the names of Brahmā, as also those of Umā and Maheśvara. It is unnecessary, in the Pandit's opinion, to further quote passages or to cite more authorities. Like the Purāṇas, all Smṛti and Saṃhitās contain references, direct as well as indirect, to the Tantra Śāstra, but the Tantra Śāstra makes no

[1] Secret Mantra.

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reference to either Smṛti or Purāṇa. This also proves the great antiquity of Tantra Śāstra. There is a Tāntrik scripture named Śivāgama containing Sūtras which have been quoted as authorities by Kṛṣṇānanda in his Tantrasāra. Its commentator is Abhinavagupta, the Court pandit of Gonardda, King of Kashmir. Gonardda died the death of a hero in the great war of Kurukṣetra.[1]

We need not here follow the Pandit in his speculations as to Buddhistic influences in Ancient America as established by Mexican architecture, or as to the similarity of the ritual of Ancient Egypt[2] to that of the Tantra, beyond stating that in his opinion such speculation supports the more direct inferences derivable from the study of Indian history and literature as to the antiquity of the Tantra Śāstra, which his essay is written to prove. The learned Mahāmahopādhyāya concludes with the expression of a doubt whether the reasons and arguments he adduces will appeal to "the great men, free of all prejudice, learned in Western language and science, with intellects brightened, sharpened, and coloured by Western philosophy," and apologizes for himself, with perhaps some latent sarcasm, as follows: "I had not the good fortune of learning deductive and inductive logic. In the Chatuspāthi of a native Brāhmaṇa Pandit, I learnt to argue whether sound follows the fall of a palm-fruit or precedes it," though he says it must not be supposed that other great logicians were mainly engaged in discussions of the "palm-fruit-falling" nature.

Western writers and Indians influenced by their works and general outlook are much occupied with this question of the antiquity and date of the Tantra. To the orthodox all Śāstra is eternal. Moreover, to the Indian temperament, as one of them has well said, sugar is prized for its sweetness without regard to the land whence it came or the cultivator by whom it was

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[1] See the Rājataranginī of Kashmir, and the Commentary on Śivāgama, of which there is a copy in the Library of the Mahārāja of Darbhānga.

[2] He points out with regard to Horus, one of the Egyptian Devatās, that Aharpati (Lord of the Day) and Aharīṣa (Ruler of the Day) are Sanskrit epithets of the sun.

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grown. It can hardly be said that we have the necessary materials for final judgement from the purely historical standpoint. If it be alleged that Indians have sometimes gone to opposite extremes, European critics and their Indian followers have, as a general rule, displayed almost a mania for belittling the antiquity of Indian religions, literature, and art. In coming to any conclusion on this matter, it is necessary first to inquire into the different elements of doctrine and practice, to distinguish what is original from what is alleged to be an accretion, or interpolation, and to consider the allegation of non-Āryan influences and so forth. It is necessary also to distinguish between Tāntrik doctrine and practice so ascertained from its expression or record in any particular document. The latter may be of yesterday, and yet its subjects may be of the ages. Some would derive the Tantra from Mahāyāna Buddhism. Others contend that the Mahāyāna school appears to have adopted the doctrines of the Indian Tantra, which is in notable respects opposed to the original doctrines of the Buddha. The influence of his teachings is rather, it is said, to be found amongst the Vaiṣṇavas, who have in their number many cryptic Buddhists, than in forms of worship which, not to mention other salient differences, prescribe the sacrifice of animals with elaborate rituals before the images of Devas and Devīs. In fact, the Lalitavistāra[1] already cited represents Śākyasingha as condemning the "fools" who make obeisance to numerous Devatās and who perform tapasyā in the cremation grounds and at the crossing of four roads, as also the practice of "sinful men and heretics (pāṣandas)" who use wine and flesh, he having prescribed the ascetic life and the avoidance of injury (whether by sacrifice or otherwise) to all beings. Professor Masaharu Anezaki,[2] after citing the Rājataranginī as evidence of Tāntrik worship at the time of Aśoka (240 B.C.),[3] says that without a doubt the Tantra began to develop

[1] Chap. xvii, using that work, not historically, but as an indication of a Buddhist view of a Śāstra which some would derive from Buddhism.

[2] "History of the Religions in Ancient India."

[3] I cite the author's views without myself expressing an opinion on the evidential value of the particular work cited.

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even before Nāgārjuna (A.D. 200), and that in observing Buddhism it has been successful despite all efforts to the contrary. In fact, as regards Buddhism, the Tantra, according to this view, stands for a Hindu conquest. How far, as some allege, the conquering doctrine has been itself subjected to non-Āryan influences is another question. Some contend that here, as in most things, there is some truth in both contentions, and that Indian and Buddhist thoughts are likely to have influenced one another. Such may think that the influence of the latter has predominated as regards certain Tāntrik schools and rituals. It is thus noteworthy that the Tārā Tantra, which is said by some to belong to the northern tradition, states that Buddha and Vaśiṣṭha were Tāntrika munis and Kula Bhairavas.[1] According to the Rudrayāmala, the worship of Tārā was introduced from Mahācīna in the Himālayas by Vaśiṣṭha, who worshipped the Devī Buddhīśvarī, according to one of the Śakhās of the Atharva-veda. The solution may possibly be found in a more perfect knowledge of the various traditions, which are said by some to have existed, than we now possess.

Whatever be the date of the first appearance of specifically Tāntrik doctrines, which owing to the progressive nature of its developments, may never be ascertained, it will be probably found, upon a profounder inquiry into the subject than has been hitherto made, that the antiquity of the Tantra has been much under-estimated. This, however, does not mean that all the current Tantras, or all their contents, are of great antiquity. The contrary is, I believe, the fact. The Meru Tantra,[2] in a curious śloka, says: "There will be born at London English folk whose mantra[3] for worship is in the Phiranga[4] language, who

[1] See A. K. Maitra's Introduction to this Tantra published by the Varendra Anusandhana Samiti.

[2] Twenty-third Prakāśa.

[3] That is, unlike some defiled (mlechcha) countries, it is not without a religion of its own.

[4] Here English. The term, which is ordinarily derived from "Frank," is applicable to the European peoples generally. Its meaning, however, according to the Śabdakalpadruma, is, "those addicted to sin and anger". It is also used, as a qualificative of disease, to denote syphilis, because of the prevalence of the disease in Europe.

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will be undefeated in battle and Lords of the world."[1] Whatever be the age of this Tantra, it may be argued that this passage at least was probably not written earlier than the eighteenth century.

Comparatively modern Tantras may, however, be based on older versions now lost.[2] On the orthodox hypothesis, moreover, there is no reason why new Śāstras should not even now appear in the world. The work of Śiva has not come to an end with the inception of the Kaliyuga. In this, as in other matters, Indian tradition, when rightly understood, may perhaps be found to largely justify itself. The following remarks of Professor Hayman Wilson have a bearing on this point, both on the general question of the antiquity of the Hindu Śāstras and that of the Tantra, if, as is commonly done, the date of the latter is to be fixed with reference to the alleged date of the Paurāṇik period, which, according to general European views, precedes them: "It is therefore as idle as it is irrational to dispute the antiquity or authenticity of the greater portion of the contents of the Purāṇas in the face of abundant positive and circumstantial evidence of the prevalence of the doctrines which they teach, the currency of the legends which they narrate, and the integrity of the institutions which they describe at least three centuries before the Christian Era. But the origin and development of these doctrines, traditions, and institutions were not the work of a day, and the testimony which establishes their existence three centuries before Christianity carries it back to a much more remote antiquity—to an antiquity that is probably not surpassed by any of the prevailing fictions, institutions, or beliefs of the ancient world."[3]

The Tantras are generally cast in the form of dialogues between Śiva and his Śakti Pārvatī, the form in which Satī, his Spouse, re-appeared after her death at Dakṣa's sacrifice, or in their forms as Bhairava and Bhairavī. Śiva is called Ādinātha,

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1 Phirangabhāṣayā mantrāsteṣāngsangsādhanādbhuvi
Adipāmandalānancha sangrāmeṣvaparājitāh
Ingrejānavaṣatpañcha landrajāśchāpi bhācinah.

2 See also what the author of the Tantratattva says, *post.*

3 Viṣṇu Purāṇa, xcix.

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the first Guru. But he is also Śakti, for he and the Devī are one.[1] The Devī is therefore included with him in the circle of Gurus. Śadāśiva, as the Mahāsvachanda Tantra states, promulgates as both guru and śiṣya (disciple), the Tantras in the form of question and answer, by the division of his real and manifested forms (prakāśa and vimarśa). Where the questioning is by the Devī as śiṣya and the answers are given by Śiva as guru, the Tantra is in the form called Āgama. Where the Devī is the teacher, as in the Nigamakalpadruma and other Nigamas,[2] the Śāstra is known as a Nigama. Both terms are derived from the *italicized* letters of the Sanskrit verses which occur in the Āgamadvaitanirṇaya,[3] and which run: "An Āgama is so called because it proceeds from the mouth of Śambhu[4] and goes to Girijā,[5] being approved by Vāsudeva.[6] Nigama is so described because it emanates from the mouth of Girijā to enter the ear of Girīśa,[7] being approved by Vāsudeva." The seven marks or topics of an Āgama are said by the Vārāhī Tantra to be sṛṣṭi, pralaya, devatānāmārcanam, sādhana, puraścaraṇa, ṣatkarma, and dhyānayoga.

Sṛṣṭiścha pralayaśchaiva devatānāng yathārchchanam.
Sādhanangchaiva sarveśāng puraścaraṇameva cha,
Ṣatkarmmasādhanangchaiva dhyānayogaśchaturvvidh.
Saptabhirlakṣanairyuktamāgamamtadbidurbudhāh.[8]

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[1] Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. i, verses 14-16. Mamarūpāsidevitvam nabhedo'ste tvayāmama; for in their ultimate ground both Puruṣa and Śakti are one.

[2] It is noteworthy that the Nigamas appear to deal largely with the Rahasyapūjā.

[3] Āgatang Śāmbhuvaktrebyah Nirgato girijā vaktrāt
gatancha girijā mukhe gatascha giriśaśrutrim
matancha vāsudevena mataścha vāsudevasya
tasmādāgama uchyate nigamah parikathyate.

[4] Śiva.

[5] The mountain-born Devī, His Spouse.

[6] Viṣṇu. The above is the special meaning of these two terms, which both also denote the Veda. See as to Nigama, Śrīmadbhāgavata Skanda, chap. v, verse 39.

[7] Śiva.

[8] That is, creation and destruction of the universe, the worship of Devas, spiritual exercises, the rite called puraścaraṇa, the six "magical" powers called Ṣatkarma (*viz.*, māraṇam, ucchātanam, vaśīkaraṇam, stambhanam, vidveṣanam, svastyāyanam), and the form of Yoga, so called.

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The same and other Tantras describe the subject (lakṣana) of such a Śāstra to be: The Supreme Spirit, the creation and destruction of the universe, the origin and worship of the Devas, classification of beings (bhūtānāng sangsthānam), the heavenly bodies, description of the worlds and hells, of man and woman, and of the centres (cakra) of the human body, the law and duty (dharma) of the different ages and of the stages of life in the individual called āśrama, the sacraments (samskāras), the consecration of images of Devata, mantra, yantra,[1] mudrā,[2] all forms of spiritual training (sādhana), and worship (pūjā, upāsana), whether external or mental, including worship with the pañcatattva,[3] consecration of houses, tanks, wells, trees, etc., descriptions of holy shrines (tīrtha), puraścaraṇa,[4] japa, vrata,[5] ṣatkarmasādhana,[6] and all forms of ceremonial rites and "magic," meditation (dhyāna), and yoga, the duties of kings, law, custom, medicine, and science generally.

The Tantras, in fact, were (for they exist only in fragment) encyclopædias of the knowledge of their time.

The Tantras are still very numerous, though the greater part has been lost, destroyed, or is missing. Of these which are known only a portion has been printed, and of these last the versions in circulation are sometimes incomplete. Thus the current version of the Mahānirvāṇa lacks the second part, which is double the extent of the first. This latter part has been long supposed

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1 Is the diagram for worship by which the mind is fixed on its object. The imprints of the Śri yantra, the Gāyatrī yantra and the Kālī yantra appear elsewhere in the book. Yantra is Mantra in the sense that it is the body of the Devatā who is Mantra. Yantram mantramayam proktam mantrātmā devataiva hi. Dehātmanoryathā bhedo yantradevatayostathā (Kaulāvalīya Tantra). As to this and Mantra, see *Introduction to Tantra Śastra.*

2 Gestures made by the hands and positions of the body employed in worship and haṭhayoga. Devānām modadā mudrā tasmāttām yatnataścharet.

3 Wine, meat, fish, grain, woman (maithuṇa), both in their literal, substitutional, and esoteric meanings, for the Tattva are of three kinds. See *Introduction to Tantra Śastra.*

4 *Vide ante.*

5 Japa is recitation, either external or mental, of mantras, according to certain rules (viddhānena mantrocchāraṇam). Vratam is a part of naimittikam or occasional karma, such as those of the Janmāṣtami, Śivarātri, Durgāpūjā, etc.

6 *Vide ante.*

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missing.[1] On the other hand, the first part of the Rudrayāmala[2] is at present not found, though fragments may exist, such as the Mantrābhidhāna, which is reputed to belong to that part, and which I have published.[3] The Śāradātilaka, a Tāntrik compendium which is much esteemed in Orissa, contains more matter than is to be found in the current printed versions known to me,[4] as is also the case with the current Bījakośa. Other Tantras appear to exist in defective or mutilated copies only.

According to the Tantras, there are three regions called Viṣṇukrāntā, Rathakrāntā, and Aśvakrāntā (sometimes called Gajakrāntā) respectively to which different Tantras are assigned. According to the Śaktimangala Tantra, Viṣṇukrāntā extends from the Vindhya Mountain to Chattala (Chittagong), thus including Bengal; the Rathakrāntā from the same place to Mahācīna, including Nepal; and Aśvakrāntā, from the same mountain to "the great ocean," apparently including the rest of India. The Mahāsiddhasāra Tantra agrees with this as to Viṣṇukrāntā and Rathakrāntā, but makes the Aśvakrāntā extend from the Karatoya River[5] (in the Dinajpur District) to Java. The following Tantras are assigned[6] to the several regions, though

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[1] It exists, however, and I hope to publish it in my collection of Tāntrik Texts.

[2] Certain Tāntrik Śāstras are called Yāmalas and Dāmaras such as the Yāmalas, Siddhi-Yāmala, Rudra-Yāmala, Brāhma-Yāmala, and the Bhūta Dāmara, Deva Dāmara, Yakṣa Dāmara. The writer of an article in vol. c of the "Asiatic Researches", pp. 53-67 (Calcutta, 1798), says: "I am informed that the Tantras collectively are noticed in very ancient compositions; but as they are very numerous they must have been composed at different periods. It may be presumed that the Rudrayāmala is amongst the most ancient, as it is noticed in the Durgā Mahattva, where the principal Tantras are noticed as 'Kālī, Muṇḍamālā, Tārā, Nirvāṇa (not the Mahānirvāṇa), Sarvasāsana, Bīra, Lingārcana, Bhūta, Uddāsana, Kālikā, Bhairavī, Bhairavīkalpa, Toḍala, Mātṛbhedanaka, Māyā, Bireśvara, Viśvasāra, Samāja, Brahmayāmala, Rudrayāmala, Sunkuyāmala, Gāyatrī, Kālikalāka, Sarvasva, Kulārṇava, Yoginī, Mahiṣamardinī. These are universally known, Oh Bhairavī, greatest of souls: and many are the Tantras uttered by Śambhu (Śiva)."

[3] Vol. i of my Tāntrik Texts.

[4] I have come across what appears to be a complete manuscript in Puri.

[5] A very sacred river which is notable in this — that it never loses its sanctity. All others do so in the month of Śrāvaṇ (July - August).

[6] See Sādhanakalpalatikā, by Nilmani Mukhopādhyāya, part ii, pp. 22-26; and Introduction to Vol. I of my "Tāntrik Texts." As to other Tāntrik works, *see post.*

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there are differences of opinion as regards particular Tantras. Thus, in the first list some would exclude the Tantrāntara and include the Yogārnava. Some Tantras appear in more than one of these lists.

The Tantras of the Viṣṇukrāntā are said to be:

1. Siddhīśvara
2. Kālītantra
3. Kulārṇava
4. Jñānārṇava
5. Nīlatantra
6. Phetkārī
7. Devyāgama
8. Uttara
9. Śrīkrama
10. Siddhiyāmala
11. Matsyasūkta
12. Siddhasāra
13. Siddhisārasvata
14. Vārāhī
15. Yoginī
16. Gaṇeśavimarśnī
17. Nityā-tantra
18. Śivāgama
19. Chāmuṇḍā
20. Muṇḍamālā
21. Niruttara
22. Haṃsa-Maheśvara
23. Kulaprakāśaka
24. Devīkalpa
25. Gandharva
26. Kriyāsāra
27. Nibandha
28. Svatantra
29. Sammohana
30. Tantra-rāja
31. Lalitā
32. Rādhā
33. Mālinī
34. Rudrayāmala
35. Bṛhat-Śrīkrama
36. Gavākṣa
37. Sukumudinī
38. Viśuddheśvara
39. Mālinī-vijaya
40. Samayācāra
41. Bhairavī
42. Yoginī-hṛdaya
43. Bhairava
44. Sanatkumāra
45. Yoni
46. Tantrāntara
47. Navaratneśvara
48. Kulachūḍāmaṇi
49. Bhāvachūḍāmaṇi
50. Devaprakāśa
51. Kāmākhyā
52. Kāmadhenu
53. Kumārī
54. Bhūtadāmara
55. Yāmala
56. Brahmayāmala
57. Viśvasāra
58. Mahākāla
59. Kuloddīśa
60. Kulāmṛta
61. Kubjikā
62. Tantracintāmaṇi
63. Kālīvilāsa
64. Māyātantra

The following are given as Rathakrānta Tantras:

1. Chinmaya
2. Matsya-sūkta
3. Mahiṣāmardinī
4. Mātṛkodya
5. Haṃsa-Maheśvara
6. Meru-tantra
7. Mahānīla
8. Mahā-nirvāṇa
9. Bhūta-dāmara
10. Deva-dāmara
11. Bījacintāmaṇi
12. Ekajatā
13. Vāsudeva-rahasya
14. Bṛhadgautamīya
15. Varṇoddhṛti
16. Chhāyānīla
17. Brihadyoni
18. Brahmajñāna
19. Gāruḍa
20. Varṇa-vilāsa
21. Bālā-vilāsa
22. Puraścaraṇa-candrikā
23. Puraścaraṇa-rasollāsa

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24. Pañcadaśī
25. Pichchhilā
26. Prapañcasāra
27. Parameśvara
28. Navaratneśvara
29. Nāradīya
30. Nāgārjuna
31. Yogasāra
32. Dakṣiṇāmūrti
33. Yoga-svarodaya
34. Yakṣiṇītantra
35. Svarodaya
36. Jñāna-bhairava
37. Ākāśa-bhairava
38. Rājarājeśvarī
39. Revati
40. Sārasa
41. Indra-jāla
42. Krikalāsa-dīpik
43. Kangkālamālinī
44. Kālottama
45. Yakṣadāmara
46. Sarasvatī
47. Śāradā
48. Śaktisanggama
49. Śaktikāgamasarvasva
50. Sammohinī
51. Ācārasāra
52. Cīnācāra
53. Śadāmnāya
54. Karālabhairava
55. Soḍha
56. Mahālakṣmī
57. Kaivalya
58. Kulasadbhāva
59. Siddhi-taddhari
60. Kṛtisāra
61. Kālabhairava
62. Uddāmareśvara
63. Mahā-kāla
64. Bhūtabhairava

The Tantras of Aśvakrāntā are given as follows:

1. Bhūta-Śuddhi
2. Guptadīkṣā
3. Bṛhatsāra
4. Tattvasāra
5. Varṇasāra
6. Kṛyāsāra
7. Gupta-tantra
8. Gupta-sāra
9. Bṛhat-toḍala
10. Bṛhannirvāṇa
11. Bṛhatkaṅkālinī
12. Siddha-tantra
13. Kāla-tantra
14. Śiva-tantra
15. Sārātsāra
16. Gaurī-tantra
17. Yoga-tantra
18. Dharmaka-tantra
19. Tattvacintāmaṇi
20. Vindu-tantra
21. Mahā-yoginī
22. Bṛhad-yoginī
23. Śivāchchana
24. Samvara
25. Śūlinī
26. Mahāmālinī
27. Mokṣa
28. Bṛhanmālinī
29. Mahā-mokṣa
30. Bṛhan-mokṣa
31. Gopī-tantra
32. Bhūtalipi
33. Kāmini
34. Mohinī
35. Mohana
36. Samīrana
37. Kāmakeśara
38. Mahāvīra
39. Cūḍāmaṇi
40. Gurvarchchana
41. Gopya
42. Tīkṣna
43. Mangalā
44. Kāmaratna
45. Gopalīlāmṛta
46. Brahmāṇḍa
47. Cīna
48. Mahāniruttara
49. Bhuteśvara
50. Gāyatrī
51. Viśuddheśvara
52. Yohārṇava
53. Bherandā
54. Mantracintāmaṇi
55. Yantrachūdāmaṇi
56. Vidyullatā
57. Bhuvaneśvarī
58. Līlavatī
59. Bṛhachchīna
60. Kurañja
61. Jayarādhāmādhava
62. Ujjāsaka
63. Dhūmāvatī
64. Śiva

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Particular Tantras have been from time to time printed, such as the well-known Mahānirvāṇa, the Yoginī, Kāli Tantras, and others. The chief collection, however, is that of Babu Rasik Mohun Chatterjee, who has published at Calcutta the following Tantras or Tāntrik works in Bengali character: Muṇḍamāla, Śāktakramaṇa, Māyā, Bhūtaśuddhi, Kaulikārchanadīpikā, Kubjikā, Viśvasāra, Puraścaraṇarasollāsa, Śāktānandatāraṅgiṇī, Nīla, Toḍala, Gandharva, Rudrayāmala, Guptasādhana, Gāyatrī, Fetkāriṇī, Niruttara, Mahācīnacārakrama, Nirvāṇakramadīpikā, Mantrakośa, Yoginī, Kulārṇava, Kāmakhyā, Kankalamālinī, Mātṛkābheda, Kāmadhenu, Mahānirvāṇa (first part), Sanatkumāra, Śāradātilaka, Tripurasārasamuchaya, Uddāmareśvara, Kaulāvalī, Mantramahodādhi, Vṛhannīla, Tārārahasyam, Rādhā, Shyāmārahasya.

A few of these and others have been printed at Calcutta in Devanāgarī and edited by Pandit Jīvānanda Vidyāsāgara—namely, Kulārṇava, Tārārahasya, Tripurasārasamuchchaya, Mahānirvāṇa, Yoginī, Rudrayāmala (Uttarabhāga), Shyāmārahasya, Tantras; the Śāradātilaka, Prāṇatoṣiṇī, Mantramahodādhi; also a collection of small works on magic (Indrajāla) entitled Indrajālavidyāsangraha.

Considerable portions of some of the Purāṇas are appropriated (as Professor Hayman Wilson pointed out as regards the Agni Purāṇa) to instructions for the performance of religious ceremonies which belong to the Tāntrik ritual and are translated from the principal authorities of that system. In fact, a large number of Purāṇas and Upapurāṇas contain Tāntrik forms of worship, and on that account and in accordance with the general view of the comparative modernity of the Tantras rejected as "genuine" Purāṇas, though accepted and relied on as such by the Tāntrik pandits. The reader is referred to the introduction of Professor H. H. Wilson's Viṣṇu Purāṇa. Reference may be here made to the Kālikā, Brahmāṇḍa, Garuḍa, Agni, Śrimadbhāgavata, Devī-bhāgavata, and other Purāṇas. In the twelfth chapter of the Kūrma Purāṇa on the other hand, it is said: "The Bhairava, Vāma, Ārhata, and Yāmala Śāstras are intended for delusion."

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In addition to the Tantras, there are Tāntrik compendia, commentaries, such as the Tantrasāra, Prāṇatoṣiṇī, Prāṇakṛṣṇaśabdāmbuddhi, Tantrābhidhāna or Mantrakośa, and others. Kṛṣṇānanda's Tantrasāra, is one of those now best known. But before his time there were, as already stated, other compilers, such as Rāghavānanda, Rāghavabhatta, Virūpākṣa, and Govindabhatta; and such works as the Rāmārchanachandrikā, Mantramuktāvalī, Bhuvaneśvarīpārijāta, Śāradātilakam, Tripurasārasamuchchaya, Svachchandasangraha Sārasamuchchaya, Somabhujangavalī, and Mantrayantraprakāśa.

Controversy has also divided the Āgamas into "good" Āgamas (Sadāgama) and "bad" Āgamas (Asadāgama). Brahmānanda Giri, the author of the celebrated Śāktānandatāraṅgiṇi (Wave of Delight for Śāktas), says:[1] "Sadāgama eva āgamaśabdasya mukhyatvāt" ("Sadāgama alone is Āgama (Tantra) according to the primary meaning of the word Āgama"). Śiva condemns, in the Āgama Saṃhitā,[2] the Asadāgama, saying: "Oh! Deveśi men in the Kali age are generally of a rājasik and tāmasik[3] disposition, and being addicted to forbidden ways deceive many others. Oh! Sureśvarī—those who in disregard of their varṇāśramadharma[4] offer to us flesh, blood, and wine—become bhūtas, pretas, piśācas, and brahmarākṣasas"[5] It is denied that this passage is any proof that the Tantra prescribing the Pañcatattva Sādhana with wine and so forth is an Asadāgama. That these verses do not, in the opinion of the author of the Śāktānandatāraṅgiṇī, amount to condemnation of this sādhana is said to be shown by the following passage in the same work in which the previous verses appear. "He who sees wine,

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[1] Chap. ii. [2] Cited in Śāktānandatāraṅgiṇī, chap. ii.

[3] That is, of a sensual and ignorant disposition.

[4] The law governing caste; and the stages of life, student, house-holder, etc., called Āśramas. The term as a general one includes the ācāra of the Sādhaka.

[5] That is, unclean, malignant, and demoniac spirits:

Kalau prāyena deveṣi rājasastāmasāstatha,
Nishiddhācharanāh santo mohayantyaparān bahūn,
Āvābhyāng pishitang raktang surānchaiva sureśvari,
Varṇāśramochitang dharmmamavichāryyārpayanti ye,
Bhutapretapiśāchāchāste bhavanti brahmarākṣasāh.

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fish, meat, woman should salute the Bhairavī Devī and say: Oṃ! salutation to the beloved of Śiva, the remover of all obstacles. Salutation to Thee, the giver of all boons, adorned with a garland of severed heads stained with streams of blood. Thee I salute for the destruction of all obstacles and the wellbeing of Kulācāra."[1] The meaning of these two passages is therefore said to be that wine, flesh, and so forth, are prohibited in those cases where their use is forbidden by the Ācāra of the particular worshipper, as in the case of the Paśu. This form of worship is not to be followed indiscriminately and without reference to the rules which properly govern it. For in that case instead of being a help to the sādhaka, it leads him along the downward path. The Asadāgama, in short, is said to be that Āgama which prescribes forbidden acts, that is, acts forbidden by the ācāra of a particular worshipper; not all such rites, but the false rites followed by the bad. Where true worship is the aim there is *sat*, where it is not there is *asat*.

* * * *

It may be asked, What is the general characteristic of the Tantra as compared with other Śāstras? In the first place the Śāstra contains provisions which are applicable for all without distinction of race, caste, or sex. The Śāstra affords to all, with freedom from Vaidik exclusiveness, the practical method (more extensive than mere ritual in its ordinary English sense) which qualifies the Sādhaka for the reception of the higher doctrine of the path of knowledge (jñāna mārga). The Śūdra and woman are not, as in the case of Vaidikācāra, under any ban. As the Gautamīya Tantra says[2] people of all castes, and whether men or women, may receive its mantras "Sarvavarṇādhikārāścha nārīnām yogyameva ca." In the Cakra there is no caste at all, even the lowest Caṇḍāla[3] being deemed, whilst therein higher than Brāhmaṇas. The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says:[4] "That

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[1] Chap. xv.

[2] Chap. i.

[3] One of the lowest and most unclean castes.

[4] Chap. xiv. verses 187, 184.

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low Kaula who refuses to initiate a Candāla or a Yavana[1] into the Kaula dharma, considering them to be inferior, or a woman, out of disrespect for her, goes the downward way. All two-footed beings in this world, from the vipra[2] to the inferior castes, are competent for kulācāra."

In the next place, as regards the subject matter in respect of which liberty is so given, it is necessary to understand the distinction which Hindus draw in religious matters between knowledge (jñāna) in the sense of actual experience, as distinguished from mere mental theorizing, and action (kriyā). The answer, then, is that the Tantra is above all a practical scripture primarily concerned with action and ritual, which the undiscerning may think has, in any case, been prescribed to an excessive extreme. It is so concerned because, though action cannot alone and directly secure liberating knowledge, the attainment of the latter must necessarily be preceded by right action. For how otherwise can such spiritual knowledge be gained? In order to secure the development of the Jīva's body, certain physical exercises are necessary. Similarly both these and other mental and spiritual exercises are required if liberating knowledge (brahmajñāna) is to be attained. Such exercises are generically termed "Sādhana," and include both worship (pūjā) and all its ritual.

Sādhana has historically varied with race and creed. The Hindu has his own in the Tantra which is called the Sādhana Śāstra. The provision of such a definite training is the strength to a greater or less degree of all ancient orthodoxies, just as its absence may prove to be the rock on which the more modern forms of religion may split. Doubtless to the newer "Protestant" spirit, whether issuing from Europe, Arabia, or elsewhere, all ritual is liable to be regarded as "mummery," except possibly the particular and perhaps jejune variety which it calls its own.

[1] Here generally used for non-Hindu, a term specially applied to the Greeks or Bactrians. There is nothing, therefore, to prevent a non-Hindu from being initiated in Kaula dharma, provided that he be fit for such initiation. Initiation, however, in such a case would ordinary be given by an avadhūta.

[2] Brāhmaṇa.

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For even the most desiccated "Protestantism" has not been able altogether to dispense with it. There is room for this spirit as for others, or it would not be there. Like, however, everything else, it may go beyond the purposes which are claimed to justify its origin.

Etymologists have derived the word "ceremony" from "cor" and "monere". The derivation, though inaccurate, explains well the purpose of the thing itself. The sacred rites which are the expressions of innermost feeling proclaim the religious truths which have inspired them and excite devotion, rendering man more sensible of the Divine Presence. So, as the Council of Trent declared, "the Catholic Church, rich with the experience of ages and clothed with their splendour, has introduced mystic benediction (mantra), incense (dupa), water (ācamana, pādya, etc.), lights (dīpa), bells (ghaṇṭā), flowers (puṣpa),[1] vestments, and all the magnificence of its ceremonies in order to excite the spirit of religion to the contemplation of the profound mysteries which they reveal. As are its faithful, the Church is composed of both body (deha) and soul (ātmā). It therefore renders to the Lord (Īśvara) a double worship, exterior (bāhyapūjā) and interior (mānasapūjā), the latter being the prayer (vandana) of the faithful, the breviary of its priest, and the voice of Him ever interceding in our favour, and the former the outward motions of the liturgy." The human need for ceremonial in the sense of the necessity which man feels of an exterior manifestation which shall both stimulate and translate his inner feelings, is such that no religion of the past has been without its rites and ceremonies, and even the shallowest of epochs, whilst affecting a superiority to them, have yet preserved these ceremonies in its civil life.

The necessity which is thus admitted exists with greater urgency in the spiritual sphere. It is idle to suppose that all or any may, through Vedāntik talk or by the mere closing of the eyes in pious pose, realize the Nirguṇa Brahman. The great teaching of the Vedānta by itself and without accompanying

[1] Portions of the Ṣodaśa Upacāra of Hindu worship.

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Sādhana can achieve nothing of real worth. Its study may produce a Pandit. But to the Sādhaka the disputations of Pandits, whether philosophical or scientific, is like "the cawing of crows". There is both reason and humour in the Hindu saying that a logician will be reborn a jackass. It is Sādhana which alone in any system, whether Hindu or otherwise, is really fruitful. The Tantra claims to be practical and to be a pratyakṣa Śāstra in that it affords the direct proof of *experience*. It is therefore one of its common sayings that, "Whereas other Śāstras are concerned with speculation only, the art of medicine and Tantra are practical, self-evident and prove themselves at every step."

The Tantra further claims not only to be practical and to contain provisions available for all without distinction of caste or sex, but also to be fundamentally rational. Nowhere else, in fact, than in the Hindu Śāstras do we find greater stress laid on the necessity of thought and reasoning. For in India it is said want of reasoning involves loss of dharma. "There is no sage who has not an opinion of his own."[1] The virtue of its general method is not merely thaumaturgic,[2] but is inherent in the mental states induced by dhyāna and other physical and mental processes, and the excitation of the exterior rituals; an inherence chiefly explained by the fact that as at base all existence is of the nature of mind, the transformation of mind is the transformation of existence itself. Thus the sacramental energy of the mantra, even when the Guru (who is himself the manifestation on the terrestrial plane of Ādinātha Mahākāla)[3] has vivified it with consciousness (caitanya), depends in part for its efficacy on the competence (adhikāra) of him who receives it.

Profoundly based on truth, however, as all ritual is, the Tantra yet recognizes that there is a stage in spiritual progress in which it becomes not merely unnecessary, but an obstacle to further advance. If Sādhana be, as it is, but a means to an end (brahmajñāna, or the realization in *personal experience* of the Brahman), with the attainment of such end, and to the extent that

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[1] Nāsau muniryasya matam na bhinnam, as the Mahābhārata says.

[2] See as to this De la Vallée Poussin, *op. cit.*

[3] Yoginī Tantra.

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approach is made to it, becomes superfluous. As the Mahānirvāṇa says: "To him who has faith in the root, of what use are the branches and leaves?" This stage is, however, both a high and infrequent one, which the great majority (notwithstanding the fancies of some of the "emancipated" in this matter) have by no means reached. As the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says, Brahmasādhana is the highest state of mind; dhyānabhāva is the middling state, and japa comes next. External worship is the lowest of all. Yoga is the process whereby union of the Ātmā and Paramātmā is achieved. Pūjā (worship) is the union of worshipper and worshipped. But for him who realizes that all things are Brahman, there is neither yoga nor pūjā. For him there is neither sin nor virtue, heaven, or future birth. There is none to meditate on nor one to meditate.[1]

In the opening chapter of the Kulārṇava Tantra it is said that "There are fools who, pleased with the mere name of the Karmakāṇḍa, deceive themselves with a multitude of rites. It is not by eating one meal a day that knowledge of the transcendent is attained." "If the ant-hill be struck, is the serpent thereby killed ?" "If the mere rubbing of the body with mud and ashes gains liberation, then the village dogs who roll therein have attained it." Ritual is necessary, but it must be accompanied both by sincerity and increasing knowledge, which leads to tattvajñāna, the sole cause of liberation. It is not to be had by talk and self-conceit. Those who read the Scriptures and know not the truth, but pass their time in disputation, are like "the ladle which, lying in syrup, knows not the taste of it." Mere talk leads to nothing. "One may discuss as to what is knowledge and what is knowable, for a thousand years." "Life is short. Many are the Vedas, many are the Śāstras, infinite are the obstacles; therefore it is necessary that the essences be mastered, as the gander sips from the water the milk which has been mixed with it." Ritual schemes exist to meet the requirements of all grades of competency; and their accomplishment with sincerity and intelligence effects their purpose. But of the perfected

[1] Ullasa xiv, verses 122, 124. See *post*.

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(siddha) Tāntrika Kaula, who has passed through all preliminary ācāras, it is said: "The wise man who through study of the Scriptures has realized the Truth discards them all as he who gathers paddy throws away the husk and straw." Jñāna derived from the Āgamas leads to the Śabdabrahman. That which issues from viveka (discrimination) is the Parabrahman. There is no realization (tattvajñāna) with attachment to Vaidik and Āgamic rites, however much these may be necessary as the preliminary means to its attainment.

* * * *

If the injunctions of the Śāstra are to be rendered intelligible, certain general principles must first be understood. This is the necessary preliminary to the presentation of the ritual facts. For in these principles lie their ultimate significance. The author, in his preface, very truly says: "I feel it keenly myself how useless it is to follow a religious practice without understanding it."

For those to whom the Indian way of thinking, expression, imagery, allusions, and metaphor are unfamiliar, it is not always easy to follow at a first reading the author's discursive argument. A summary of that argument in a Western and more ordered form would therefore be useful. The conclusion of our enquiry, however, appears to be the fitting time for such a summary, even were there space available for it in this volume. The author's preface indicates the main lines on which he proceeds, which I here shortly state and amplify.

The previous portion of this Introduction states the circumstances under which Indian Śāstra was at one time neglected where it was not misunderstood or condemned. Scepticism, unbelief, and then (according to orthodox views) heresy, passing under the name of "reform," had prevailed. The author, in the beginning of his Preface, rejoices to note a revival of true religion, but as an adherent of Tantra is grieved to observe that this Śāstra had not, when he wrote, received its due share of attention. This was the more necessary in that it is the source of all Sādhana (practice) and of all Mantras and Yantras. Brahma-knowledge cannot be attained without self-purification, and for this the Tantra provides the only means in the Kaliyuga.

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Doubtless there are (he writes) to be found nowadays some superior Vedāntic persons [1] who are wont at all times to say that the portion of the Śāstras which relates to worship and ritual practice (Karmakāṇḍa) is only for those who are devoid of knowledge. This is so; but the implication that they have escaped this class has often but little foundation. They are doers of action (Karma), and as much affected by it as are others. The knowledge of which the Śāstra speaks is not the metaphysical faculty (with its acquisitions) of the mind on the ordinary plane of jāgrat consciousness but is that spiritual experience the existence of which constitutes the fourth stage of turīya consciousness attained by successful yoga. Notwithstanding—and in fact, because of—their philosophical disquisitions, such persons still belong to the dualistic world, and there is nothing to be ashamed of in that. We cannot blow it away with our breath, and why should we trouble to do so if it is alleged to be a mere nothing. It would seem as if modern Monism had, through dread of the dualistic world shrunk all its limbs, and was trying to find a place wherein to hide its head in an unhappily existing universe.[2] Monism (advaitavāda) is doubtless true; but so also, necessarily, is the world of duality for that state of consciousness whence, indeed, it comes. In its own way, this world is as real as the Brahman whose līlā [3] it is. What else is the world play of the Brahman but that show of duality which surrounds us ?

Worship, by its definition, involves the dualistic idea, and is itself necessary for every dualist, since it is, whether in its ordinary sense, or in that in which it is conceived as all action dedicated to and informed by spiritual purpose and intention, [4] the true and only expression of the Ātmā to Itself on this plane. It is an essential verity that the Self alone knows the Self. But how may complete self-recognition be attained except the preliminary stages of Sādhana and worship have been passed ? If the elect attain success along the path of knowledge (jñāna mārga)

[1] See *post.*

[2] See *post.*

[3] "Play". When understood, a very profound Indian concept, proceeding on the ground that no other reason can be assigned for the world appearance than that which is inherent in the nature of the Brahman itself. See *post.*

[4] See the fine Mantra in Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. Ch. vi, vv. 178-181.

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it is because, through action and devotion in this and previous births, they have become competent for that path. What the persons to whom the author refers really mean is that such Karma as consists in worship and so forth must be abandoned, but that which is required for the service of wife and children may be retained by the possessors of Brahma-knowledge. It is, however, only those who have truly acquired siddhi who are thereby released from the obligation of observing these rules of the Karma-kāṇḍa, which help to produce it.[1] The Tantra does not, therefore, at the outset ignore this visible, palpable world. We must acknowledge and rightly tread this earth before the consciousness of the embodied Ātmā can be transformed into that other state of consciousness which reveals—for it is in fact—the unconditioned Ātmā Itself. But haste to know the Beyond should not blind us to that which is its present manifestation, constituting both the spacious field and material for Sādhana. He alone realizes the sweetness of the Divine Play "who has plunged into non-dualistic truth after having churned the dualistic world," which is Its expression to us.

The Brahman is reached through Its universe-aspect. The world does not intervene, as though it were an obstacle hard to surmount between man and God, and set to frighten us. It is the wealth of the Śakti of Viśveśvarī,[2] whom it reveals. The Tantra, therefore, takes into its arms, as if they were its two children, both Dualism and Monism. affording by its Sādhana and the spiritual knowledge generated thereby the means whereby their antinomies are resolved. It does not entertain the conceit that metaphysics, and still less science, however useful in their own sphere they may be to the full development of conditioned consciousness, can effect anything beyond it. Being but workings of the jāgrat mind, they can never of themselves transcend the limits of those conditions which constitute it. The ultimate

[1] The results of sincere worship are patent. If, however, the cause of this be sought, it will be found to lie in the psychological truth that such a worshipper grows akin to that which he worships—a truth which is expressed in the Indian notion of the blissful abodes, sāmīpya, sālokya, and others. The Devatā becomes not only the content of, but the consciousness itself, of the Sādhaka.

[2] The Devī as Mistress of the Universe.

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questions which that mind raises never receive an answer which it can verify whilst it remains in its conditioned state. The end of all Sādhana is the establishment of that fourth or higher state of consciousness, the existence of which is itself the answer to a question which is no longer put. The Tantra harmonizes Vedāntik Monism and Dualism. Its purpose is to give liberation to the jīva by a method through which monistic truth is reached through the dualistic world. It immerses its sādhakas in the current of divine bliss by changing duality into unity, and then evolving from the latter a dualistic play, thus proclaiming the wonderful glory of the Spouse of Paramaśiva in the love-embrace of Matter (jaḍa) and Spirit (caitanya). Those who have realized this, move and yet remain unsoiled in the mud of worldly actions the mere touch of which is to others the cause of their perdition. Though resting and rocking upon the waves of the saṁsāra, they are not of it, but detached, and as it were the petals of some wind-rocked lotus. Śiva has therefore said: "In the world some desire non-dualistic, others dualistic, knowledge, but those who have known My truth have passed beyond Dualism and Non-Dualism."

Sādhana, which is of three kinds—physical, verbal, and mental—must be accomplished by the body, senses, and intellect, according to present conditions of country, time, and person. These, however, are all now bad. India, which has for centuries eaten the bread of servitude to strangers, is to-day filled with persons born of parents of different castes, foreigners, defiled people, and adherents of other religious faiths. Bad and filthy habits and practices, oppression, license, and prostitution prevail. In the impure body, lust, anger, greed, pride, delusion, and envy, contend as upon a battle-field. Restless are the senses, and doubting the heart. The circumstances of the times render the carrying out of the Vaidik rites and disciplines impossible. That Āryan life no longer exists in which every event, from the conception in the womb to the cremation of the body, was accompanied by Vaidik Mantra. A heavenly body which, through the control of the passions, has become a suitable vehicle for the development of Brahma-knowledge according to Vaidik rules, is nowadays

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impossible of achievement. Foreseeing this, Śiva revealed the path of Tantra, the Sādhana of which is framed to meet the needs and circumstances of the Kaliyuga, and the varying temperaments and proficiency of those who live in it. If there be any doubt of its efficiency, actual practice will verify the reality of its claims.

It is not necessary that faith should precede Sādhana. This if sincerely performed, will produce faith by the effects it achieves in the mind of the Sādhaka. If the knowledge of the Brahman already exists, there is no use of Sādhana. It is in fact, the very want of such knowledge which renders all prayer and practice necessary. Further, whether one believes in it or not, medicine has the power to cure disease. It does not wait upon the intellectual recognition of that fact. In the same way Siddhi (success), the visible (pratyakṣa) fruit of the Śāstra, is the result of its inherent potency. Who knows what will happen in the next birth ? That is the best of all philosophies which bears actual and visible fruit in this world. For reasons which the author explains the provisions of the Śāstra act with speed and efficiency, so that fruit ripens on the Tāntrik tree before even blossoms appear on the Vaidik tree. Owing, however, to the neglect of these practical principles, no useful results were being obtained from the renewal of the religious spirit beyond mere barren, pious velleities.

The spiritual ambitions of some were far too presumptuous. Instead of attending to daily duty and worship, they were giving quite an incompetent attention to such extremely subtle and advanced subjects as Nirvikalpa Samādhi, Videhakaivalya,[1] and the like matters, which are in no way the concern of the vast bulk of men, who are making good progress, according to their state, if they worship God, and do not hate or cheat their neighbours. Others of greater spiritual competence, through neglect or ignorance of the practical directions of the Tantra, which alone reveals the path, had lost their way. After pointing out that it is idle to suppose that knowledge of the truth can be acquired

[1] That is, the highest form of ecstasy: liberation from the gross body, etc. The author's remarks are not without application to such Westerners as are prematurely attempting Yoga.

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by simply reading the Yoga Vāśiṣṭha or Gītā in the gloom and under the sway of the Kali age, the author, in an interesting passage, states that he has known many a spiritually disposed man who, under the influence of such a day-dream, "has ended in becoming neither a believer nor an unbeliever, but a queer being half man, half lion." "By constant meditation *on a misty nothing* his mind and heart become such a vacuity that there is neither faith, reverence, devotion, nor love in them, but merely a bewilderment, with the inward lament, 'Alas! I am lost.'" He continues "In many places we have found such persons coming secretly to ask, 'What means are there left to us ?' But their only difficulty is this—they want to know whether it is not possible for them to become Tāntrik or Paurāṇik worshippers in secret whilst keeping up the show of the possession of Brahma-knowledge, and without having publicly to wear the sacred crown lock, or thread, or to paint their body with the sacred marks," "Is it not deplorable," he asks, "that a man should be in this condition, repenting at last in this fashion, at the close of his life, after having gone through all its useless troubles ?" Doubts concerning the Tantra, the Sādhana Śāstra, arise from ignorance of its true character. Here is to be found the reason why recourse has not been had to it. Common people had, no doubt, much talked about the Śāstra, and quarrelled over it. Some "illiterate traders, crafty discoverers of magic, and thoughtless and starving interpreters of the Śāstra," had busied themselves with it. "But want of faith in the Śāstra is becoming deeply rooted in people's minds by the troubles into which they fall through failure to realize the truth, *and by the exposition to vulgar gaze of things a proper understanding of which can be acquired from Gurus only.*"[1] "It is difficult," he says, "to guess how many hundreds of simple-minded Sādhus have been, and are being, deceived by the *dangerous temptations* held up before them by these people." Want of understanding of the Śāstra, together with actual abuses of its injunctions by some of its adherents, have led to the insults now levelled at it.

[1] See *post*. One of the causes of this degeneracy is referred to by the author later.

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Discussion and agitation and insult have, he says, to such an extent and with such constancy persecuted and wounded the community of Sādhakas that no one who is a son with a body of flesh and blood and strength can bear to see the sacred names of the Mother and Father of the universe slandered and abused in such manner." "Whose heart," he writes, "is not pained to see the axe of bitter abuse laid at the root of Siddhi and Sādhana? The object of our effort is to remove this great pain in the heart of the community of Sādhakas. We hope that the sons of the Āryan race will not hesitate to uphold the blissful standard of triumph in the assuring name of Her who destroys all Asuras."[1] From the Tantra alone, must be learnt its principles, the exposition of which he lays as his dakṣiṅā (offering) at the Lotus Feet of Dakṣiṅā (the gracious Devī).

ARTHUR AVALON

[1] The demoniac enemies of the Devas and of Dharma. Here also the earthly representatives of the Asura spirit, who oppose religion.

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TANTRA TATTVA

PART I

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INVOCATION [1]

OBEISANCE TO THE ALL-GOOD MOTHER WHO IS THE SUPREME DEVATĀ

1

O ALL-GOOD MOTHER !

I bow to Thee Who, sweet in the joyous play of the music of the flute, art the beloved of Rādhikā;[2]

Who appeareth as a sun illumining the three worlds with Thy effulgent rays;[3]

Who destroyeth the body of Kāma in the right half of Thine own eternal Self;[4]

Who art in joyous play Heramba[5] the son, resting on the lap of Thine own Self as Ambikā the Mother;

Who art the field of play for the desires of Mahākāla; and

Who giveth birth to the three worlds.

2

May the Kaivalya fruit of Kulatattva[6] grow in the grove of my heart on that blossoming and verdant Creeper[7] who, crowned by the beauty of the crescent moon, and more beautiful than

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[1] Mangalācaraṇa.

[2] The beloved Prakṛti of Kṛṣṇa in Goloka. "He who is the First male, the imperishable One, Hari, on Him you have fixed your affection. Him whom all extol as the invisible, the unseen, the impenetrable, you regard as your husband" (Prem Sāgar). Here the Devi is saluted in Her incarnation as Kṛṣṇa, the adored of the women of Vraja. Tantra says that in the Kali age, Kṛṣṇa and Kālī, Gopāla and Kālikā, are awake (jāgrata)—that is, effective.

[3] See Lalitā Śahasranāma, verse 3.

[4] Man and wife form one body, of which the right half is the male. Śiva destroyed Kāma, the Deva of Desire, with fire flashed from his eye, when the latter sought to distract him from his great Yoga.

[5] The elephant-headed Gaṇeśa, son of Śiva and Pārvatī.

[6] The liberation which is the fruit of Tāntrik Kulasādhana.

[7] Latā: a term for woman, who is thus thought of, embracing and dependent on man, as the creeper (latā) clings to a tree. Thus, in the Yogavāśiṣṭha, Gaurī, the wife of Śiva, is described "embracing him as the Mādhavī creeper clasps the young Amra tree, with her bosom like a cluster of blossom" (Nirvāṇa Prakaraṇa, chap. xviii.)

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the rain-clouds, and more playful than the wife of the rain-cloud,[1] rests on the soft, flowery bed of the breast of Mahākāla,[2] intoxicated with the sweetness of supreme bliss.

3

O my heart, seek the shelter of that blue cloud-like Lady Who saith "Fear not," Whose restless curling hair makes lines of refulgent beauty, Whose graceful form is clothed with space,[3] Who charms the great Bhairava[2] with the soft and sweet delights of Her eyes, playful like two large bees.[4]

4

I bow at the lotus feet of the Supreme Devī;[5] at those feet which give joy to the heart of Him Who is ever joyful,[6] whose form is the mantra[7] in the mahāyantra,[7] and Whose embodiment[8] is the Tantra.

5

Mother, in Thy two aspects of Śakti[9] and Śākta,[10] Thou art the source of both Āgama and Nigama Śāstras.[11] What Thou hast said as Pārvatī[12] is Nigama, and what Thou hast said as Śiva is Āgama. Thou alone, in Thy two aspects of Śakti and Śākta, art the nurse and nourisher of both Āgama and Nigama. Thou alone, in Thy two forms as Sādhikā and Sādhaka,[13] holdeth in Thy bosom the Tantra Śāstra, with its teachings concerning Śivatattva and Śaktitattva.[14] Again, it is Thou Who, in Thy

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[1] That is, the lightning.

[2] Śiva.

[3] That is who is naked as both Kāli and Śiva are represented to be.

[4] So the Yogavāśiṣṭha speaks of the eyes of Gourī "as resembling the clusters of black bees fluttering in the summer sky" (Nirvāṇa Prakaraṇa, chap. xviii.)

[5] "Goddess" or God in Its mother aspect as creatrix, nourisher, and ruler of the worlds.

[6] Śiva, Her spouse; as are also His worshippers. Tāntrik Gurus's names end with Ānanda (joyful).

[7] Devī is Sarvayantrātmikā (Lalitā, vesres 53 and 56).

[8] Tattva. And so the Lalitā (verses 53) addresses Devī as Saratantrarūpā.

[9] Power.

[10] That is Śaktimān, or one who possesses power. He in whom She as Śakti inheres, though in reality both are one.

[11] See *Introduction to Tantra Sāstra.*

[12] Spouse of Śiva.

[13] That is, male and female practisers of Sādhana, and worshippers.

[14] That is, the principles relating to the Śiva and Śakti aspects of the one Brahman. The Devī is in the form of Śiva (Śivamūrtih), for, as Śruti says: "There is one Rudra hidden in all things. He is with Māyā. He is Devī Herself, and not separate from Her."

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aspects of Śakti and Śākta, art the shelter and guardian of both Nigama and Āgama. Whatever modes of Sādhana[1] have been prescribed in the Tantra Śāstra are hidden in Thy bosom in Thy two aspects of Śiva and Śakti. It was for this I said, O Mother, that it is Thou Who giveth birth to, nourisheth, and guardeth Nigama and Āgama in this world. But to destroy them, that even Thou canst not do. For the Tantra Śāstra all full of mantra is but another form of Thyself. Were the Tantra destroyed, Thou also would be destroyed. Though Thou Art the destroyer of the universe, Thy power of destruction avails not against Tantra. So I say, O Mother, that the Nigama and Āgama which are in Thee will never be destroyed! But destroy for once, O Mother, the Nigama and Āgama which are in me. Make cease my repeated coming in and going out of this world as Śakti, as Śākta, as Prakṛti, as Puruṣa.[2]

(Or it may be explained in another way).[3] O Mother, Thou alone, as Śakti and Śākta (as Prakṛti and Puruṣa), art the creator of the Nigama and Āgama[4] of Jiva.[5] It is by Thy law that Jīva,[5] through the union of Prakṛti and Puruṣa, takes birth. It is Thou who, in Thy two aspects of Śakti and Śākta (mother and father),[6] nourisheth and protecteth Jīva. Thou alone, O Mother, in Thy twin aspects of Śakti and Śākta, whereby Thou createth, and sustaineth and guardeth the outgoing and incoming of the world, art the cause of the outgoing, sheltering, incoming, birth, sustenance, and preservation of Jīva.

By Thy Mercy, bring about the dissolution[7] of my world[8] in these twin aspects of Thyself as Śakti and Śākta.

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[1] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[2] There is a play on the words Nigama and Āgama, as meaning not only forms of the Tantra but also the coming in and going out, the birth and death and rebirth, of the human Jīva, who is the manifestation on the earthly plane of Prakṛti and Puruṣa.

[3] That is, the Author says that this Sanskrit "śloka" may bear (and probably was written to bear) another interpretation. [4] Birth and death.

[5] The embodied spirit, which is the supreme Spirit, viewed under the apparently limiting conditions known as "upādhi".

[6] The mother is always placed first, not "father and mother," as in English.

[7] Pralaya, or the dissolution of the world, which completes the return movement to its cause.

[8] That is, the world as it appears to the Author. For to each person the world is his own creation; it is only imagined.

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O Thou Who art Śakti-Śiva in Thy universal Prakṛti-Puruṣa form,[1] grant me wisdom so that the beauty of the world-enchanting Mother may fill my eyes, my mind, my heart, and the whole of my world.

Appear, O Mother, in Thy eternal form illumining the ten quarters.

With the collyrium paint[2] of wisdom grant glorious vision to the eyes of Thy son blind since birth.

Grant to me that wheresoever I may turn them, whether on earth, the waters, or on space, Thy beauteous form may make me forgetful of the appearance of the world.

Invocation[3]

Mother! in this world, all, before setting themselves to ought, make invocations of varying kinds.
But what invocation shall I make ?
I know of none but that to the feet of the all-good Goddess.
All that I am about to write in the Tantratattva is already known to Thee who knoweth the hearts of men.
Yantra,[4] Mantra,[4] and Tantra are not distinct from Thee.
But I, though in reality inseparate, wish to remain separate.[5]
As Thou in thy substance art Brahman,[6] as Thou existeth in the form of the universe,[7] so art Thou full of play and dancing.[8]
As Thou art all full of joy, will, consciousness and matter,[9]

---

[1] See as to Prakṛti and Puruṣa *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[2] Añjana, which is used to clear the vision.

[3] Mangalācaraṇa—in Bengali: the preceding invocation being in Sanskrit, with Bengali translation and commentary.

[4] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[5] By the will to separate life, which while itself a manifestation of the Devī is overcome by Her as Mahavidyā: and because thus only can he enjoy Her.

[6] Brahmamayī. In the Kūrma Purāṇa Śiva says: "The supreme Śakti is in me, and is Brahman Itself. This Māyā is dear to me, by which this world is bewildered." Hence the Devī in the Lalitā is called "Sarvamohinī" (all-bewildering.)

[7] Viśvamayī.

[8] Nṛtyamayī and Līlāmayī. The world is the movement and play of the Supreme, as the Sūtra says: Lokavattulīlā kaivalyam.

[9] Ānandamayī, Icchhāmayī, Chinmayī and Mrinmayī. The Brahman is Sat (existence), Cit (consciousness), and Ānanda (bliss). Icchhā (will) is one of its Śaktis, and having created the visible world, the Brahman enters into it. Tat śṛṣṭvā tadevānuprāviṣat. The Devī is (Lalitā, verse 76) Kṣetrasvarūpa—that is, the field, which is known by the Soul (Kṣetrajñā) or matter. Linga Pr. says: "Devī becomes matter" (Kṣetra).

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So, O Mother, I wish Thee to fill my mind, my eyes, my heart, with love.

Thou, too, art the power whereby it is in me to take Thy name.

It is Thine own song which Thou wilt hear.

In the love of Thyself Thou wilt dance.

What invocation then can I make ?

The food which I shall give Thee is already Thine. Of it my portion will be the sacred remnants only.

Thou wilt be intoxicated and forget Thyself in Thine own joy.

In the tranquil and solemn ocean of unity I shall swim, and raise therein the waves of duality which are the cry of "Mother, Mother."

If it vexes Thee, drown me with a thrust of Thy foot, but then in so doing Thou must first raise Thy foot from the breast of Mahākāla.[1]

May be Thou wilt turn to Him with wrathful eyes, and say: "Kill him." But instantly I shall laugh outright and clap my hands, and say: "This is Mother's."[2] O Dark Beauty, whose substance is a mass of consciousness![3] O Mother! show me for once the full play of wrath upon the splendour of Thy world-bewitching beauty.

Great is my desire, O Mother! to see the play of merciful flames reddening with wrath[4] in that face of Thine adorned with smiles.[5]

Unless that desire of mine is fulfilled, Sādhana[6] becomes full of pain.

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[1] Śiva. The Devī is represented as standing on Śiva, who is, as it were, a corpse, for he is bhoktā (enjoyer) only, whilst she is karttrī (actress).

[2] This is a play on the word "ma" (mother) which, as a noun in the possessive case becomes in Bengali "mar", which is also the verbal imperative "mar," meaning "kill".

[3] Cidghana, as if Her body were a thickened mass of consciousness.

[4] The Devī is Krodhākārānkuṣojjvalā (Lalitā, verse, 2). This is explained in chap. XVIII of the second part.

[5] The Devī is (Lalitā, verse 59) cāruhāsa (with beautiful smile); the saying "The moon is thy sweet smile" means that there is a certain state of consciousness (prabodha), which gives the highest bliss, and which should be learnt from the Guru.

[6] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

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O Thou who dispelleth fear from the heart of Thy Devotees[1]
O Thou who gladdenest the heart of Bhava[2]
Thou knowest (the secret of) Thy play.
Whether Thou makest me afraid or makest me laugh or weep, teach me to say "Mother," so that in doing that which is auspicious (Mangalācaraṇa) or inauspicious (Amangalācaraṇa) I may take shelter at the feet of Her Who is good (Mangalā),[3] dancing and shouting:
"Victory to the Mother."
Victory to Kulendra Kulānanda.[4]
Victory to Guru,[5] Kāmadeva Tārkika.
Victory to Kuladānanda[6] and his disciples.
Victory to the Lord, the Supreme Guru.
Victory, Victory, Victory to Kṛṣṇānanda.[7]
Victory to the most Supreme Guru.
Victory to Guru, the object of highest desire.
Victory, Victory to Bhairava and Bhairavī.[8]
Victory, Victory to the accomplished Sādhaka.[9]
Victory, Victory to the Sādhikā who grants Siddhi.[10]
Victory to Yantra, Victory to Tantra.
Victory, Victory to the Tantra Śāstra.
Victory, Victory to the revealer of the Tantra;

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1 Fearlessness, at which the Tāntrik aims, and which is the special gift of the Devī. The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa says: "When you are remembered in times of difficulty, you take away all fear of all beings." She is Bhayāpahā (remover of fear). Śruti says (Tai. Up., ii. 9-1): "By knowing the bliss of that Brahman none fear anything."

2 The watery form of Śiva in the Aṣṭamūrtih.

3 A play on the word "mangalācaraṇa," which also means "invocation"

4 Celebrated Tāntrika.

5 See the Lalitā (verse 137): "We adore the Devī who assumes the form of the Guru (Secret) in the form of secret knowledge beloved by her secret devotees, residing in the secret place." Hence she is Guhyarūpiṇī.

6 Celebrated Tāntrika.

7 Celebrated Tāntrika.

8 Śiva and Śakti and their worshippers are so named.

9 See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

10 Success.

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Victory, Victory to the Īśvarī [1] of the Tantra.
Victory, Victory to Her who fulfils all desires.
Victory, Victory to Her who is all-good.
Victory, Victory, Victory, Victory to the name "The all-good Mother of the world." [2]

[1] Feminine of Īśvara—Lord; the Devī, the object of Tāntrik worship, who is ruler or promulgator of all Tantras, Sarvatantreśī and Sarvatantrarūpā (Lalitā, verse 53).

[2] The Devī is the Holy Mother—Śrīmātā—the first of Her thousand names in the Lalitā Sahasranāma, where its commentator Bhāskararāya says: "The mother is usually called upon in times of sorrow, but our natural mothers are not able to remove the three forms of pain (tāpatraya). Great men have said: 'Since I have had many thousands of births, I have had many mothers and many fathers. I know not how many I may have in the future. O, Treasure House of compassion, save me who am overpowered with fear, and have no other refuge from the vast ocean of Saṃsāra, full of disaster.' The greatest World-Mother is the only one who can remove the endless misery of existence. We should praise Her as the Mother, so that She may be induced to show mercy to us."

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VICTORY TO ŚRĪ ŚRĪ IŚVARĪ, THE ALL-GOOD DEVĪ

PREFACE

By the grace of the all-good Mother, the drum of Sanātana Dharma[1] seems to be again sending forth sweet and auspicious notes of triumph in Bhāratavarṣa,[2] the land of Āryas. Just as an intelligent man, who has a good knowledge of music is naturally impelled, as it were, by some mantra on hearing the deep and soft sound of musical instruments to beat time at every measure; so also a child who has no knowledge of, but who loves and is charmed by, music, feels himself impelled to keep time at every measure by shaking his head, or moving his finger, or clapping his hands, or dancing, or by some other movement. Similarly, every scion of the Āryan race in India, be he intelligent or not, is to-day intoxicated with the sweet music of the charming mantra of the widespread agitation on the subject of the Sanātana Dharma, and is keeping time at every measure and dancing. In this great festival, in this ancient Durgā festival of India, astrology, philosophy, Smṛti, Purāṇa, Veda, Vedānta, and many other musical instruments are playing in the extensive courtyard of the universe. But we are grieved to find that the great instrument of the Tantra Śāstra, in which all other instruments are included, on which all other instruments depend, and which is the sole source of all yantras[3] and mantras, is to-day silent. We know that the proper place for the playing of this instrument is not a courtyard, but the interior of the temple of Tantra Śāstra, which is full of mantras; as also that the proper place for its discussion is not at a meeting or by society at large, but in the heart of the accomplished Sādhaka. But what can we do? We are players on the outside. So long as we do not hear the solemn

[1] In the present connection the phrase may be understood to refer to the eternal religion of the Hindus. As to Dharma, see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[2] India.

[3] The imprints of the Śrī Vidyā Yantra, and that of Smaśāna Kālī appear elsewhere in the book.

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sound of sweet mantras from the accomplished mouth of the Sādhaka within the temple as also the triumphant sound of the bell in his hand, so long do we fail to make out what music to play—the music of ablution, the music of ārati,[1] the music of sacrifice,[2] or the music of bhoga.[3] The discordant noise of musical instruments in the mantra-less courtyard outside the seat of worship is the sole cause of all the disorder which now besets the work of preaching dharma, even in spite of so much agitation, discussion, speech-making, and interpretation. These musical instruments observe neither time nor measure. Perhaps at the place of worship the rite of great ablution[4] has not yet been begun; but in the courtyard outside the music of the final oblation in homa[5] is commencing. It is deeply to be regretted that the very community which trembles with fear, like a person suffering from constitutional fever, at the very mention of the rules of practice, is to-day constantly busying itself with such extremely subtle and secret matters as nirvikalpa-samādhi, samādhi,[6] videha kaivalya,[7] supreme love and nirvāṇa, liberation. The result is that this untimely and timeless music has come to be of no purpose and impossible of performance.

In fact, the sight of this outward bustle of science and philosophy made by the community devoid of siddhi and sādhana[8] reminds us of our village (bārwāri) pūjā.[9] Just as the condition of the pūjā makes one fear lest in course of time even the image itself should be dispensed with, so the condition of society to-day makes one afraid lest the talk of siddhi and sādhana should one day disappear from the Āryan Society. Let us, however, console ourselves with the knowledge that, even if it were possible for the sun and moon to cease to move, it is impossible for this pūjā[10] to become a village pūjā. Although it is the property of common

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[1] Ārati (waving of light before the image).

[2] Bali. [3] Offering of food. [4] Mahāsnāna.

[5] The sacrifice in fire. [6] Highest form of "ecstasy".

[7] Kaivalya, in which the Jīva becomes free from the trammels of the body.

[8] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[9] A pūjā carried out by subscription in which often more attention is paid jo the accompanying amusements than the pūjā (worship) itself, which is their tustification. [10] That is, Siddhi and Sādhana.

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people, it is always uncommon; and, although it is always uncommon, every member of the Āryan Society has always a perfect right to it as an independent sādhaka. In this pūjā there is no priest (purohita). Its object is not self-deception, but sādhana for the self and acquirement of siddhi. In this temple of sādhana the worshippers are not[1] unwilling to repeat the mantra on which we depend, but are doubtful about its efficacy. They are not incapable of repeating the mantra, but are apprehensive lest it be of no effect. There is, therefore, a hope that if this doubt can be dispelled and this apprehension removed, a day will soon come when the ten quarters of India will resound with the united voice of innumerable Āryas, loudly declaring: "There is no Śāstra superior to Tantra, no guru superior to Tantra, no path superior to Tantra, no method superior to Tantra." Emboldened by this hope, we make this novel entry into the field of work, depending on the community of Sādhakas for support.

It may be said that when doubts have arisen about the Sādhana Śāstra,[2] it is no easy matter to remove them. We, too, do not deny this. But we say that the fact that it is not easy does not make it altogether impossible. It is happy news that doubts have arisen. When thirst has appeared, one need not be anxious about getting water. An unfathomable lake full of water to the brim lies in front. One has only to come down to drink of the water. Having before us the well-arrayed presence of the Tantra Śāstra full of the nectar of eternal truth,[3] we need not be anxious about dispelling the doubts of the Āryan mind. It is only necessary to advance slowly in the path of truth. It is a matter for regret that, although thirst has appeared and the lake lies in front, it has yet become necessary to advertise the fact and to preach in order to induce people to drink the water. Advertisement is, however, in fact, required, not so much in order to induce people to drink the water, but that the path may be cleared.

There is now much discussion, dispute, and quarrel among common people over the Tantra Śāstra, and the path which

[1] As in the village pūjā, where the worship is left to the purohita.

[2] The Tantra which, being a practical Śāstra, is essentially concerned with Sādhana, as to which see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[3] Tattva.

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leads to the inner truth has become very difficult, very tortuous, full of doubts and thorns. These thorns and doubts are not ascribable to any fault in the lake itself, but are due to want of traffic thereto.

Formerly, in the glorious days of happiness and good fortune of Bhāratavarṣa, Āryan sādhakas were wont to enjoy, even in their homes, the blessing of drinking the nectar of truth[2] granted to them by their gurus. It was not then necessary that they should bathe in a place of pilgrimage[1] for the purpose.

Under the remorseless pressure of the wheel of destiny such days are now past for Bhāratavarṣa. One by one the crest-gems of the race of sādhakas have found rest at the lotus-feet of liberation[2] of Her who is all-merciful. For want of competent gurus the community of disciples is lamenting in deep darkness. We know not when again will the Īśvarī[3] of the world illumine the hearts of devotees with the brilliant light of Her merciful glances; when again the blind children of the world, who now live at a distance from their mother, will open their eyes of consciousness, and, immersed in the effulgence of the beauty of Her whose substance is consciousness, get up on the lap of Ānandamayī,[4] crying with an overpowering joy "Mother, Mother"; nor when again shall we hear the words, "The tie of the heart is broken; all doubts are dispelled and all karmas[5] are destroyed for him who has seen Him is higher than the highest."

It is true that the path of Tantra has become full of thorns, but if, on hearing this terrible news, we sit down for ever to ponder on it with fearful hearts, the thorns will never be removed. If you wish to follow a path, you must take your stand on it. The thorns do not belong to the path, but have come to it from outside. Do not be afraid. The dry and worthless thorns will be broken and ground to dust under the heroic tramp of the feet of sādhakas.[6] Fearing lest you should not believe in our words, we shall, with our eyes fixed on the feet of sādhakas, be to them their shoes.[7]

[1] Tīrtha. [2] Kaivalya.
[3] The Devī, Mother and Mistress of the world.
[4] The ever-Blissful Mother. [5] Effects of action.
[6] Those who practise Sādhana: devotees.
[7] As the shoe comes between the road and the feet and protects them, so the Author will come between Sādhakas and the thorns to protect them.

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We care not if we be cut, torn, wounded, and lacerated all over. We have a strong desire to reach the path of truth, holding the feet of sādhakas to our heart, and to sink for once in the vast lake of the nectar of Tantra. We hope that the community of accomplished sādhus[1] and sādhakas will not fail to fulfil this desire on our part.

During the progress of the nineteenth century many Tantras have been printed and translated. Of these, the compilation made by Mahātmā Rāmatoṣaṇa Bhattācārya under the title of "Prāṇatoṣiṇī," and published by Prāṇa Kṛṣṇa Biswās Mahodaya, is a work which really gladdens the heart of the world of sādhakas. Next the Āryan Society has been greatly benefited by the publication, by Rasika Mohana Chattopādhyāya Mahāśaya, of the Tantrasāra with a translation, and of many other Tantras. A faint idea of many a Tāntrik principle has thus been reflected in the mirror of the hearts of sādhakas. But, unfortunately, these indistinct impressions have themselves become a source of terror arising from deep doubts. A study of the Śāstra has served rather to make the intricate bonds of the heart stronger than to break them. Still, it seems to have been a source of great good; for, from the doubts it has raised, there has to-day appeared in society a spirit of inquiry into śāstric (scriptural) truths. With the exception of the Prāṇatoṣiṇī and the Tantrasāra, all works which have been published on the subject of Tantra are but thorns on the path of truth.

Three classes of vipers are riding together over the Tantra Śāstra—namely, a number of short-sighted and illiterate traders, a few crafty discoverers of practices of magic,[2] and some thoughtless and starving spiritual interpreters of the Śāstra. Through them society is to-day going down to perdition. It is difficult to guess how many hundreds of simple-minded sādhus have been, and are being, deceived by the dangerous temptations held up before them by these people. Want of faith in the Śāstra is becoming deeply rooted in people's minds by the troubles into which they fall through failure to realize the truth, and by the

[1] Saintly men.

[2] Indrajāla.

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exposition to vulgar gaze of things a proper understanding of which can be acquired from gurus only. This want of faith cannot be eradicated by anything but the weapon of Śāstra. One must stand at the door of Śāstra in order to dispel doubts about it. From the Tantra alone must be learnt what the Tantra has said about the principles of Tantra.[1]

Secondly, as regards worship,[2] many people think that faith must precede practice. But we do not think this possible, particularly in the case of those most hidden and obscure mysteries about Tāntrik worship to which we find reference made. The intellect is powerless to understand why the Śāstra has enjoined their performance. Nothing but disgust, hatred, disrespect and irreverence can find place in the conclusion at which man's erring intellect then arrives. Not to speak of matters which are unknown to common people, even amongst such things as are of common knowledge, and thus well known to them, concerning Ṣaṭcakra[3] alone there are innumerable interpretations, ideas, and experiences.[4] Most of those who, in the rush of the daily novel religious waves of the twentieth century, lose their footing and know not what to do, nowadays take the name of Kula-Kuṇḍalinī,[5] in order to establish themselves on firm ground.

Besides this, there is a class of yogīs[6] devoted to the Upaniṣads and enlightened by the Yogavāśiṣṭha, who often say that there is really a lake of clear water within the body, and that lotuses blooming in them form the Ṣaṭcakra! In sorrow the Sādhaka and poet Rāmaprasāda has said:

"O mind, what search do you make for Her ? Madman! She must be contemplated with feeling in a dark room. Can she be caught without such feeling ? "

But, with a loud voice intoxicated with the drink of the honey of lotuses he has sung:

"In the bed of lotuses Kāli, in the form of a female swan (hamsī), plays amorously with the male swan (hamsa)."

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[1] Tantra-tattva.
[2] Upāsana.
[3] The centres in the body.
[4] Pratyakṣa siddhi.
[5] The Devī whose seat is in the Mūlādhāra Cakra.
[6] Ironically.

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It has become difficult to bear in silence all the insult to which we see the Śāstra subjected nowadays. Moreover, there is a class of pure sāttviks[1] who every now and then say that Kālī is "butcher Kālī",[2] that Tantra means "licensed grog-shop";[3] that Śiva wrote the Tantra Śāstra under the influence of the fumes of gāñjā,[4] and so forth.

We have no time to pay any heed to the words of these Non-Āryas. Goats begin to cry as soon as the drum sounds the music of the Durgā pūjā festival, but that does not do away with Pūjā.[5] Good deeds, of which the Dakṣayajña[6] is an example, will be taken care of by Vīrabhadra[7] himself. We know that there are reasons for saying some hard things, but how is Kālī or Śiva or Tantra to blame ? The pity of it all is that those who abuse the Tantra in this way are themselves initiated in Tāntrik mantra. But what can we do ? It is the nature of unchaste women to live on the means of their husbands, and at the same time to sing the praises of their paramours. We are not sorry to see the downfall of those whose nature is such. What we are sorry for is that the discussions and agitations carried on by these wicked people, and their example, constantly persecute and wound the community of sādhakas to such an extent that it is almost on the point of being destroyed. Who that is a son with a body of flesh and blood and possessed of strength, can bear to see the sacred names of the Mother and the Father of the universe slandered and abused in such a manner ? Whose heart is not pained to see the axe of bitter abuse laid at the roots of siddhi and sādhana ? The object of our effort is to remove this great pain in the heart of the community of Sādhakas. We hope that the sons of the Āryan race will not hesitate to uphold the blissful standard of triumph in the assuring name of Her who destroys all Asuras.[8]

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[1] Persons in whom the sattva guṇa predominates, "good people," here used ironically.

[2] Because animal sacrifice is made to this Devatā.

[3] Abkāri: the reference being to the use of wine in the ritual of the Tāntrik Vāmācārins, and the abuse of that ritual in disobedience to Śāstric injunctions. Intemperance as the Śyāmarahasya says, leads to Hell.

[4] Hemp (*Cannabis indica*).

[5] At which they are sacrificed.

[6] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[7] The Great Bhairava produced by Śiva to destroy Dakṣa's sacrifice.

[8] Demons.

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Thirdly, we often find that of such members of the Āryan Society as have been recently initiated, or are willing to be initiated, many are aimlessly moving about along various paths. Of some, perhaps, the gurus are dead, some have taken initiation from women gurus; some are sorry for the incompetence of their Gurus; some are disciples of sannyāsis, who have gone away to distant places where it is difficult to go to them; some have only sons of gurus, who, too, are of immature age, ill-educated, or uninitiated. In the case of some, the families of gurus have died out; and some, again, who have seen the different views of different munis[1] in the works of Tantra Śāstra printed with translations and commentaries, are, as it were, counting one by one the waves of a vast sea. Every one says: "Do this," "Don't do this." But if I ask why I should do this, he becomes dumb. I do not disbelieve the words of the Śāstra, nor do I say that it will be useless to follow them. I only want to know what it is that I do. Unfortunately, there is no means of my knowing it. Such a destructive thunder has fallen on the high head of the present high society that not only people are ignorant that the mūlamantra[2] of the Iṣṭadevatā,[3] the Devatā of one's worship, has a meaning, but many are even averse to believing that it may have one. It might not have mattered whether I know the meaning or not, had not the Śāstra itself, on the authority of which we base our practices, or the little of them we follow, said that it was useless and improper to follow a practice without knowing and understanding it.

In the Kulārṇava Tantra it is said: "O Spouse of Śambhu! fruitless are the worship and all the acts of those who do not know the true nature of Devatā, the principle[4] underlying yantras,[5] and the śakti[6] of mantras."

I cannot disbelieve the great saying of the Śāstra, for how can I ignore the prohibitions of the Śāstra whose commands I have to obey? Next I see it proved in my own case that it will be useless to follow a practice without knowing and under-

[1] Sages (satirically).
[2] The principal Mantra of a Deva.
[3] Deity of the worshipper.
[4] Tattva.
[5] Worshipped diagrams.
[6] The potency of the mantra.

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standing it. How can I disbelieve that of which I myself am a witness ? I feel it keenly myself how useless it is to follow a religious practice without understanding it. The prohibition, therefore, must be acted upon, and in order to do so the thing must be known and understood. I have, however, already stated what the condition is of those from whom I am to know and understand it. Owing to these circumstances, it has become necessary to find out a means by which people will be prevented from giving up practice through want of understanding, trampling through want of knowledge, on the Syamantaka gem which adorns His head, and thinking that daily worship and the like are so much waste of labour. It is necessary that I should have firm faith in the doctrine, that the truth which I have come by is unerring whether or not I can act according to it, and that the path which I have taken is the broad royal road to the seat of the Queen of Queens[1] of the universe. It is after a due consideration of the opportunities which the elements of time, place, and person may at present offer for finding out a means of effecting this that we undertake this great pious act[2] of expounding the principles of Tantra. This pious act is no doubt higher than the highest, and we are more insignificant than the most insignificant. It makes one laugh to think of Rājasūya[3] Yajña in a beggar's house. But there is no help for it. One who is hungry cannot afford to be ashamed of eating. In particular one who stands on this path should naturally be devoid of shame; for He who is the crest-gem of shameless people and clad with space[4] is the Revealer of the Tantra Śāstra. In this path there is no cause for shame in being a beggar. He who has shown the path by performing this Rājasūya Yajña is Himself the crest-gem of beggars. In spite of His being the King of Kings[5] of the three worlds, He is eternally a beggar at the door of Annapūrṇā,[6] the Mother of the universe. Being the meanest of the servants

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[1] Rājarājeśvarī.

[2] Vrata.

[3] A great sacrifice performed in ancient times by conquering Kings.

[4] Śiva is represented naked.

[5] Rājarājeśvara.

[6] The Devī bountiful who dispenses food and who presides at Benares.

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of such a world-renowned Beggar-Master, why should I be ashamed of begging ? Begging is the tribute which we have to pay to our King. The fundamental principle of our worship is to worship the Mother with alms received from Her (to worship the Ganges with Ganges water). If one is to be called a beggar or to be ashamed for this, then we do not know who is not a beggar and who will not be ashamed. The three worlds beg, and there is none but that Jagaddhātrī[1] to give alms. Directly or indirectly, She is the only hope. We therefore, trust that Mother Annapūrṇā, who dwells in the hearts of all Sādhakas, and is the Intelligence who works the jīva-instrument,[2] will fill this begging bowl of ours with remnants of Her food. By the blessing of the Father of the universe and the grace of the Mother of the universe, even in such a destitute house as we possess, the final dakṣiṇā[3] of the rājasūya of Tantra Tattva will be placed at the lotus feet of Dakṣiṇā (the gracious Devī).

ŚRĪ ŚIVA CHANDRA
ŚARMA VIDYĀRṆAVA

KĀŚĪ (BENARES)
1811, Saka Era
The month of Falguna

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[1] The Devī as supporter of the universe.

[2] Jīva-yantra; the jīva, embodied spirit, is Her instrument.

[3] Presents offered to the officiating Brāhmaṇas at the conclusion of a rite.

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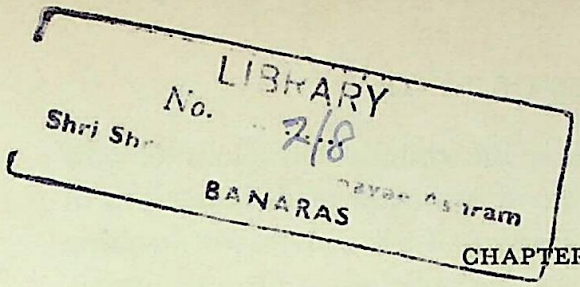

PRESENTED

CHAPTER I

APPEARANCE AND APPLICABILITY OF THE TANTRA SCRIPTURE

NECESSITY FOR THE SCRIPTURE

THE living together of many persons in one family is called the Samsāra.[1] He is a praiseworthy Karttā,[2] who in the performance of his family duties, justly makes all members of the family the objects of an equal care, and of both affection and punishment. Though the householder has equal care and affection for all, yet punishment is properly awarded to him who strays from the right path and thinks the Karttā is partial. This is household morality in man's small kingdom, the house. This morality, when applied to a kingdom, is called statesmanship. In short, whenever equality is to be kept among a number of people living in union, the King must, as all admit, make provision both for the contentment and punishment of his subjects. Whether these understand it or not, the King must, if he would preserve the kingdom, take hold of this rod of statesmanship which is both stern and sweet. What Indian is there who, living in this portion of the Empire which is under the sole sovereignty of the present Queen Empress[3] (Rājarājeśvarī) will deny this? You and I are each the King of a small family kingdom. It is of such combined kingdoms that the Empress of India is to-day Rājarājeśvarī. Again, She[4] is the Rājarājeśvarī of the

[1] The Saṁsāra is the coming and going, the cycle of birth, action, death, and rebirth: the world in which all live who have not, by knowledge of the self (Ātmajñāna) and the extinction of the will to separate life, attained liberation (Mokṣa). Brahman is the root of the eternal Asvattha (fig) tree, with roots above and branches below (Kaṭh. Up., iii. 2. 1). It also means in Bengali a family.

[2] The head of the joint family in a Hindu household.

[3] The book was written under the reign of Queen Victoria, whose name is retained to give point to that which follows.

[4] The Devī ("Goddess") or God in Its mother aspect as creatrix, nourisher, and ruler of the worlds (see A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess")

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three worlds,[1] whose kingdom is the countless millions of vast worlds. She is the Queen without a second of the kingdom of the universe, and Śāstra[2] is the name of her universe-controlling and unfailing will. You and I have not the capacity to understand the principles which govern the profound statecraft of the kingdom of eternal worlds which belong to the Empress of the universe. You and I are in this more insignificant than the most insignificant, illiterate, and ignorant people. Our sole capacity is to obey Her commands. They alone understand the world-play[3] of Brahmamayī,[4] who, by the mercy of Mahāvidyā and the grace of Brahma-vidyā,[5] have been able to make their way through the mass of dualistic[6] darkness thick with illusion,[7] and to reach the ultimate truth of monistic doctrine.[8] You and I have come to this world with the duty cast upon us of advancing only along that path which is marked by their footprints. As the courtiers of a royal court are not the authors, but merely the interpreters, of statecraft, so the truth-seeing Ṛṣis[9] are not the originators of the Sādhana Śāstra,[10] but its remembrancers merely.[11] It is not a Śāstra marred by mistakes, errors, and deception. Bhagavān, the creator of all creatures and knower of all hearts, is its revealer. He in whom mistakes are mistaken, in whom error is erroneous, and in whom deception is itself

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[1] The Triloka, Earth (Bhūh), the upper world (Bhuvah, Suvah, and others), and the underworlds (Pātāla).

[2] Scripture.

[3] The world is the play of the Brahman. As the Sūtra says, Lokavattulīlā Kaivalyam.

[4] The Devī who is one with Brahman.

[5] The Devī as destroyer of ignorance and illusion (Avidyā), which veils the Reality. Both Māyā and Vidyā reside in the Lord as His Śaktis, like shade and light of the sun, and are the respective causes of bondage and liberation.

[6] Dvaita is that which sets the world and the embodied spirit (Jīva, apart from the supreme spirit (Parabrahman), as opposed to Advaita which proclaims their unity.

[7] Avidyā. [8] Advaita.

[9] Inspired seers, by whom the Śāstra were "seen"—that is, to whom it was revealed.

[10] Sādhana is the means employed to attain an end; in this case the ultimate aim of Being. The Tantra is pre-eminently a practical Sādhana Śāstra.

[11] The Author of Śāstra is the Brahman (God). The Ṛṣis merely heard and handed it down.

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deceived. Bhagavatī,[1] the supporter of the world is its hearer. Nārada and other Ṛṣis learnt the truth[2] from Brahmā[3] and other Devas.[4] Vaśiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra, Gautama, and other Gurus[5] learnt in their turn from the latter. It is these alone who are the courtiers of the royal court of the Empire of the Universe. You and I, the subjects of this Empire of the Universe, are merely the servants of that statecraft in the form of Śāstra which has been promulgated by them. They have had the privilege of being near the person of the King, and have thus had an opportunity of observing with their own eyes the principles which, even in the smallest matters, govern His actions. They have, with bowed heads, admitted the unerring truths of Śāstra. To look, then, askance at these truths, to attempt airily, without reaching the greatness or acquiring the knowledge of the Ṛṣis to set them aside is just as if one were to try to blow away the Himālayas—an act which is ridiculous enough to make the intelligent laugh, the mad man dance, and which is likely to bring a violent death to the foolish Non-Ārya.[6]

UNDERSTANDING OF THE SCRIPTURE

I hear you say: "Take me there; I will examine with my own eyes whether the thing be true or not." But the answer is that it becomes him alone to say this who has eyes to see and feet to walk, and simply desires a knowledge of the path. As for me, I have neither eyes not feet nor knowledge of the path, but only a semoniac, indomitable egotism, which prevents me from seeing what I have, and what I have not. Still, I know not how kind She is. Lame as I am, the Mother[7] has carried me through the journey of eighty-four lakhs of births,[8] fraught with the greatest of difficulties, and has placed me in an Āryan gotra[9] in Āryavarta, in the land of Bhārata,[10] where freedom has its

[1] Feminine of Bhagavān—the Devī. [2] That is, the Śāstra.
[3] The creative Deva of the "Trinity" (Trimūrti), who must be distingiuguished from the Supreme Brahman in the neuter voice.
[4] "Shining ones," or "Gods". [5] Spiritual teachers.
[6] The Hindus are properly called Ārya, and their country Āryavarta.
[7] The Devī who is called Ambikā and Śrīmātā.
[8] The previous births, as inorganic things, aqueous animals, creeping animals, birds, beasts, and man, though which the soul evolves. *Cf.* Empedocles *apud* Diog. Leart., viii. 77. [9] Lineage. [10] India.

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fullest play. But how hard is the wheel of ill fortune! The moment I fall from the lap of the Mother,[1] that very instant my head is made restless with the waves of freedom. Now, I would rather sink in that sea of freedom which I love so much, and would rather die than believe that I am dying without ocular proof of it.

You may say, "My path leads to death, but, unless I die, how can I know that path of mine is bad and that yours is good? This is all that I can say about acquaintance with the path." Even he who is prepared to serve egotism with such deadly resolve, the ever-merciful Ṛṣis call with a sweet tone softened with love, and say: "You are not asked to believe as a favour. Practise, and you will see for yourself that Medicine, Astrology, and Tantra produce visible results at every step."[2] Lame though I am, I thus reach the place I sought by the blessing of the Most High; and by the grace of Śāstra, unbelieving even as I am, the path is made known to me. But still my wants are not supplied. Without eyes, how can I see? How can I look for the path? Instantly the Śāstra says: "Jīva,[3] even though you are blinded by the darkness of ignorance, seek shelter at the feet of the Guru.[4] He with sticks smeared with the brilliant paint of wisdom will open your celestial eyes." The Śāstra says: "By whom the eye is opened."[5] But I hear: "By whom the eye is rooted out."[6]

How may one avert this misfortune? What shall I do with this egotism which makes me feel ashamed to say to the Guru: "I do not understand." It was for this I said that there is no peace until this indomitable egotism ceases. It is useless to take a Guru if you have yourself understood. But if you have not, why should you be ashamed to admit it? Perhaps you will say:

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[1] Literally, "the skirt of the dress" of the mother, to which little children cling.

[2] A common saying establishing the pratyakṣa and experimental character of the Śāstra, which is primarily concerned not so much with speculation as with fact.

[3] The embodied spirit, here the human being. [4] Spiritual director.

[5] Collyrium, applied with stick to the eyes, which is believed to clear the vision. [6] A play on the words "unmīlitam" and "unmūlitam."

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"Explain first, and then I shall believe." Why all this useless importunity? If you think that you can show that the Śāstras are mistaken by dint of your own intelligence, and that you will destroy it with the sharpened arrows of reasoning, argument, and judgment, then you must have made good progress indeed! This Śāstra is neither philosophy nor science. It is the Sādhana[1] which leads to Siddhi.[2] It must be practised as well as understood. By practice, even though without understanding, it will be made plain. But no amount of understanding without practice will effect this. A Mahāmahopādhyāya pandit[3] who has conquered the whole world with his learning is, if devoid of practice, not the equal of the meanest of insects in the domain of Sādhana. On the other hand, should a great fool prove himself to be a faithful devotee attached to Sādhana, he is considered by Śāstra to be one in a thousand. It has been said: "Perhaps but one man in a thousand strives for Siddhi, and amongst a thousand of those who strive, maybe only one may be found who knows me truly." It is not the hero of intellect, who is not also the hero of austere practices,[4] who wins the battle of Sādhana. Just as all the efforts of a great charioteer who has with him an army complete in all its four component parts[5] are useless if he be himself unarmed, so all the learning of a pandit of mighty intellect is but a vain thing if he be not equally possessed of the power which arises from Sādhana. Whoever with the resolve, "I will accomplish my object or die in the effort," has jumped into a fire, to him, a crest-gem amongst devotees, the Śāstra gives shelter in its secure arms. If to-day all men had the strength of faith of Kāmadeva Tārkika, hero most powrrful in the field of austerity, or of Ganeśa Upādhyāya, whose life was one long surrender to the mother; or of Rāmaprasāda,[6] who was, as it were, a bee intoxicated with the honey of the lotus feet

[1] Art and practice.

[2] Siddhi means success generally. It includes the eight lesser great powers, such as dominion over the elements, and the great Siddhi or liberation (Mukti).

[3] A title of honour given to learned pandits.

[4] Tapas.

[5] That is, infantry, cavalry, elephant corps, and the chariots.

[6] The celebrated Bengali poet and Śākta.

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of Śakti,[1] should we in that case have had to sing in Tantra Tattva[2] the song of all these evil designs (against the Śāstra)? But the day is now lost to us. That unflinching faith in Tantra, the Sādhana-Śāstra, has been shaken.

DOUBTS CONCERNING THIS SCRIPTURE

It is said: "We have the Vedas the Śāstra of prayer. Why, then, has the Tantra Śāstra again been put forward?" This is the first point of doubt in the present-day society of men vain of their education. What appears to them as a matter of still greater doubt and the mere raving of a madman is the assertion that by means of the Tantra Śāstra such Siddhi may be gained in one life, in one year—nay, in one week—as can only be otherwise with uncertainty attained after the practice of age-long austerities. Why, they say, should Bhagavān[3] be so merciful to the Kali age[4] with all its most heinous sins, as to make it possible to attain in one life or in one week that which was rarely attained even by Devas like Indra.[5] If such be possible, then Īśvara,[6] they say, must be highly partial. At such talk it is difficult to restrain a smile. You and I might just as well be inspectors of the kingly work of Īśvara, whose reputation for administration would in that case depend on your or my criticism. On the other hand, I ask, if He is partial, what do you or I lose by that? If He who is the highest, all-powerful, omni-present,

[1] Śakti is Devī—that is, both the power of God and God Itself. Each of the Devas has His Śakti or power worshipped under the form of His spouse.

[2] This book.

[3] God; that is, He who is possessed of the six forms of aiśvarya which pertain to Īśvara—*viz.*, Śrī (auspiciousness), Vīrya (power), Jñāna (wisdom), Vairāgya (dispassion), Kīrti (glory), and Māhātmya (greatness).

[4] The fourth or last of the four ages in which the orthodox consider the world now to be, and which is marked by sin and weakness. The first, or Satya Yuga, was the golden age; in Tretā Yuga virtue declined by one-quarter; in Dvāpara Yuga by one-half; and in Kali Yuga by three-quarters.

[5] Deva of the firmament, King of the celestials.

[6] The "personal God," Creator and Ruler of the world, the Brahman with qualities; thought of with Prakṛti; associated with, but not Himself subject to, Māyā (Māyāvichchhinnam caitanyam ca Parameśvara) (Vedānta Paribhāṣā, 9). The supreme individuality is the quality of Īśvara. In the Viśvaśarīra chapter of the Virūpākṣapañcāśika it is explained as "Lordship, activity, independence, consciousness itself."

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and the knower of all hearts becomes partial, how can you or I prevent that? You may say we shall blame Him. But what does it matter to Him whether you and I blame Him? He who knows the hearts of the meanest insect, does He not know that you and I will blame Him? In spite of His knowing it, He has taken on Himself the blame, and, solemnly declaring, "True, true, again true—true there is no doubt," has said: "It is true and beyond all doubt true that in the Kali age there is no liberation for him who forsakes the path laid down in the Āgama,[1] and attempts to pursue another. In the Kali age the fool who seeks to attain Siddhi by the paths shown in other Śāstras is like a thirsty man who digs a well on the very banks of the Jāhnavī.[2] For the attainment of happiness in this world or the next there is no path which leads to both enjoyment and salvation[3] so excellent as that shown in the Tantra."[4]

What will you gain by threatening with your blame Him from whose own mouth has come this unerring conclusion? He who is afraid of blame or pleased by praise may be your Īśvara, but he is not the God of the world. He who is God (Īśvara) of the world is the Lord (Īśvara). His divinity and lordship over the universe stands supreme, spurning both glory or disgrace, praise or blame. This is the wealth of his Vaikuṇṭha.[5] If you please, you may blame, you may chastise, you may deal hard blows with your fist at the foot of the Himālaya Mountains, yet the immovable Lord of mountains will not be shaken, though your fingers will be torn and broken. Those who, in endeavouring to discuss the truth as to the divine (Īśvara Tattva), have realized the effect of doing so may desist. But those who judge God by their own ideas of justice will not be satisfied with

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[1] Here the Tantra.

[2] The River Ganges.

[3] The peculiar claim of the Tantras is that it gives both worldly enjoyment and salvation. It is Bhuktimuktikarāṇica. In Yoga there is no enjoyment (Bhoga), and in enjoyment no Yoga (union with the Supreme). But the Tāntrik has both (Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. i, verses 50, 51; Muṇḍamālā Tantra, chap. ii). Bhoga, or enjoyment, is of five kinds—pleasure arising from sound, touch, sight, taste, and smell. This enjoyment may be had on earth or in the transitory heavens of enjoyment, which are to be distinguished from mukti, or liberation, the state which alone endures.

[4] Mahānirvāna Tantra, chap. v.

[5] The heaven of Viṣṇu.

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that. We ourselves do not deny the apparent partiality alleged, but we say that His strict adherence to justice has not been broken by the mercy shown to the creatures of the Kali age. On the contrary, not to have treated them with such kindness would have been unjust. We ask what sort of justice was it on the part of God to give to them of the Satya age[1] a longevity of a lakh of years,[2] with their life centred in the marrow,[3] and then to give to men in the Kali age a longevity of a hundred years, and life dependent on food? If one injustice is done, that is no excuse for doing a hundred others. Moreover, what can you do if injustice has been once done? But, as a matter of fact, "Poison is the remedy for poison." What does it matter to you or me if He has made up for the deficiency in justice caused by the grant of greater longevity in the Satya than in the Kali age, by, according to Sādhana, a more rapid effect in the Kali age than in the Satya age? In fact, in Him there is neither deficiency nor the reverse. In this drama of the world He is both the Chief Actor and the Chief of Actresses. This drama commenced in the beginning with the union of Actor and Actress, and will conclude, according to His unfailing will, at that night which is the end of time.

Those who are acquainted with the principles of Sanskrit drama know that it is composed in the form of the tail of a cow.[4] I do not know on what evidence rhetorical poets discovered this form of composition, but, so far as one can surmise, it appears that form was adopted in imitation of the ideal drama of that Primeval Poet,[5] the Creator of the universe. From the description of the four ages—namely, Satya, Treta, Dvāpara, and Kali[6]—it would seem that in the ideally composed play of the

[1] The first, or golden age, marked by virtue, prosperity, happiness, health, etc. (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*). [2] 100,000.

[3] The Hindu belief is that in the first age life was centred in the marrow, in the second age in the bones, in the third age in the blood, and in the last or present age is dependent on food.

[4] As Śloka, 277, of the Sāhitya Durpaṇa says: Gopuchchhāgrasamagrantu vandhanantasya kīrtitam. The acts of a drama should be so arranged as to be reduced in size from the first to the last, just as the tail of a cow beginning broadly tapers to a point.

[5] Brahmā, so called in the Śrīmadbhāgavata, and elsewhere.

[6] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

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universe the chain of things from Brahmā, the Hiraṇyagarba and grand-father[1] of men, to the close of the Kali age is arranged in the form of a cow's tail. When the close of the play approaches the King of actors, Mahākāla,[2] will after hastily withdrawing all the materials for the play, lay down to rest upon the couch of Mahāpralaya[3] in the last world-scene, the great cremation ground strewn with ashes. The Mother, the Queen of actresses and Charmer of Mahākāla,[4] will place Her right foot on His heart, and, losing Herself in the waves of love and joy of the great mass of consciousness,[5] appear, as it were, a dancer maddened by untiring dancing. The hasty closing and destruction of the Kali age is but a preparation for this dancing, and nothing else. The thought of this scene may make the unbelieving and impious tremble with fear, but these happy tidings will raise joyous waves of love in the heart of the devout. The will of Her whose substance is will[6] shall be fulfilled, for it is in the power of none to frustrate it.

Next, when you become jealous at the mere mention of His unfathomable mercy towards His creatures of the Kali age as compared with that which He showed to those of the Satya age, it would seem as if you thought that the creatures of these two ages constituted two distinct classes at feud one with the other, and never meeting in each other's home. A creature of the Satya age will not (you suppose) appear in the Kali age, and one of the latter age will not have appeared in the former. No matter; be it so. But I ask: Everyone admits that not every creature in the first three ages has attained Siddhi,[7] nor, on the other hand, is everyone in the Kali age devoid of Siddhi. What,

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[1] Lokapitāmaha.

[2] Śiva (see Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. v).

[3] The great dissolution of things, when all will return to that from which they on the morning of the day of Brahma originated.

[4] The Devī, as Mahākālī.

[5] Cidghana. Cit, the pure Brahman, is the hearth of fire from which, according to the Lalitā, the Devi springs (Cidagnikuṇḍasambhūtā).

[6] Ichchhāmayī. The substance of the Devī is the three Śaktis, Ichchā (will or desire), Jñāna (knowledge), and Kriya (action).

[7] That is, become a siddhapuruṣa.

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then, is the fate of such Sādhakas[1] of the first three ages who have not attained Siddhi, and of such men of the Kali age as are not, but are about to become, Sādhakas? According to your argument, no creature of the Kali age will have appeared in the Satya age, and no individual of the latter age will appear in the Kali age. In other words, at the close of these ages such persons will attain either Nirvāṇa,[2] and be totally absorbed in the Para-brahman,[3] or will sink at once into an eternal hell. Blessed be this judgement to which your justice leads you! What an unerring decision![4] You were startled at hearing that the Jīva[5] in the Kali age can attain Siddhi in one lifetime. But the Jīva of your Satya age attains Nirvāṇa the moment it commences Sādhana. It may thus, indeed, happen that a man who by good fortune is born at the close of the Satya age may attain without labour in one life, and by the mere circumstance of his birth at the close of that age, that same Siddhi which another has only attained in the same age by the practice of austerities for ten million years.[6] Advocate of Justice, tell me now of what kind of justice is this the impartial and carefully considered opinion ?

You and I, whose knowledge does not extend beyond, at most, a hundred years, are not in a position to argue as regards that justice, the wheel of which turns but once in eighty-four lakhs[7] of births. In the Viśvasāra Tantra the Śāstra says: "There is no birth like unto the human birth. Both Devas[8] and Pitṛs[9] desire it. For the Jīva the human body is of all bodies the most difficult to come by. For this it is said that human birth is attained with extreme difficulty. O Pārvatī,[10] amongst

[1] That is, those worshippers who practise Sādhana.

[2] That is, complete unconditioned Mukti, as distinguished from the temporary and conditioned padas known as Sālokya, Sārūpya, Sāmīpya, and Sāyujya.

[3] The unconditioned, attributeless or higher Brahman, as contrasted with the same Brahman manifesting itself with attributes in creation—the apara or "lower" Brahman.

[4] Valihari.

[5] The embodied spirit, which is the supreme spirit, viewed under the limiting conditions known as "upādhis".

[6] A crore, or an hundred lakhs, or 10,000,000.

[7] 8,400,000.

[8] Devas, the celestial intelligences intermediate between Iśvara, the Lord, and Man.

[9] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[10] The spouse of the God Śiva. The Tantras are generally cast in the form of a dialogue between Her and Her husband.

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those beings who have obtained this rare human birth, those who have conquered all doubt are very few, and of those who have conquered doubt such as are attached to Mantra[1] and Tantra are again very few. Among such pious men as are attached to Mantra and Tantra, such as are proficient in Tantra, which is adored by all, are the best; and again, amongst the latter the Sādhaka is the best of all, who is deeply versed in all the Tantras."

"It is said in all the Śāstras that of the Jīva's eighty-four lakhs of births the human birth is the most fruitful. In no other birth can Jīva acquire knowledge of the truth. Human birth is the stepping-stone to the path of liberation. But rare are the meritorious[2] who come by it."

"O Daughter of the mountain,[3] Jīvātmā, which decreaseth not, passes through eighty-four lakhs of births as inorganic things, insects, birds, beast, and the like. And after that, O Supreme Devī, it attains that human body which is so difficult to acquire."

Jīva attains the position of the twice-born,[4] having had thirty lakhs of births as inorganic things, nine lakhs of births as aqueous animals, ten lakhs of births as creeping animals,[5] eleven lakhs of births as animals of the air,[6] twenty-four lakhs of births as beasts, and four lakhs of births as human beings, having thus in all travelled through eitghty-four lakhs of births. When Jīva attains the human body, it becomes Lord of Dharma.[7] It is again born and again dies. In this manner, controlled by the bonds of Karma,[8] the Jīva takes birth from various sources,[9] and dies eighty-four lakhs of times. By the command of Yama,[10]

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[1] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[2] Puṇya.

[3] A title of Pārvatī as daughter of the mountain-king Himavat.

[4] That is, the three superior castes, Brāhmaṇa, Kṣattriya, and Vaiśya which upon the Upanayana ceremony become twice-born, and have thus both a natural and a spiritual birth.

[5] Worms, serpents, etc. A lakh = 100,000.

[6] Birds, etc.

[7] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[8] Karma is action and the product of action. Each action produces its necessary result. So long as a man's Karma is not worked out, and the thirst for separate life is not exhausted, so long he remains in its bonds. It is of two kinds, good and bad, both constituting the "impurity of action".

[9] Yoni.

[10] Lord of the lower world and of death.

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Jīva goes to the Brahmaloka.[1] On its return from thence, it obtains the human body, which is so rarely obtained, and is able to secure from a good Guru initiation in the mantra of Mahāvidyā and knowledge of the truth. Then alone does the Jīva gain the supreme liberation, and by the grace of Mahāvidyā has not to return so long as the universe[2] endures. In its eighty-four lakhs of births as inorganic and organic things, beasts, birds, insects, flies, and the like, the Jīva enjoys longevity according to its Karma. Some live one hindred years, some a thousand, some a lakh, some even more, and some live crores[3] and crores of years. It passes my understanding that Śāstra can be your authority for the notion that all Jīvas–past, present, and future—of this enormous cycle will attain the highest Samādhi,[4] owing to the simple circumstance that an age has come to an end, and this in spite of the fact that their Karma is of all forms fulfilled, unfulfilled, and partly fulfilled, and partly unfulfilled, worked out and unworked out, partly worked out and partly unworked out.[5]

But you may, as a last resort, say: "I do not believe in eighty-four lakhs of births." But it does not become you to say this either; for the very authority and reasoning upon which you accept the four ages spoken of in the Śāstras are the same as that on which you are bound to accept the statement as to eighty-four lakhs of births. Both are conclusions of Śāstra. Who will believe the man who accepts one part of the Śāstra and judges the other mistaken? Who thinks the right half of a man's body to be conscious and the left unconscious? Let me put to you a plain question. Why should you not believe? What is the cause of your unbelief? You will say, The number eighty-four lakhs. But I reply that that very number which is the cause of your unbelief is the ground of my firm faith. Who are you to say that, because these eighty-four lakhs of births are unseen by you and me, that what is unseen does not exist? The

[1] Satya: region of Brahma, the highest, or, according to some, the three highest of the upper worlds—Satya, Mahah, and Tapoloka.
[2] Brahmāṇḍa, lit. "egg of Brahmā".
[3] A crore is 100 lakhs, or 10,000,000.
[4] Here "end".
[5] Pūrṇa, apūrṇa, pūrṇāpūrṇa, bhukta, abhukta, bhuktābhukta.

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most you can say is that you do not know whether they exist or not. For the same reason, that I cannot say that it exists because I have not seen it, you cannot say that it does not exist because you have not seen it. If it is non-existent because I have not seen it, then the world does not exist for the blind man. The blind man, moreover, does not see himself. Is it, therefore, to be concluded that he does not exist for himself? It matters not if he does not exist. But I ask, who is it that affirms the negative? He who is himself non-existent cannot affirm or deny anything.

At the time of the happening of that cause which gives fatherhood to man and motherhood to woman, the child exists in the atoms of semen and blood. He does not see that incident. Why do you, then, without visual evidence on your part and on the faith of others' words believe that those who are called your father and mother are such? May be on principle you will object and say that you do not believe in that also. On rare occasions a real cause may exist for this unbelief. But, being a man, can you boldly assert it? Are we to suppose that every father and mother in the world is subject to such a doubt? Such a statement, even if one were able to make it, would be nothing but the raving of a madman. I have no objection to your doubting the eighty-four lakhs of births. But I say in that case let it be strictly a doubt. Do not bring it under the category of things certain. For the doubt is whether the eighty-four lakhs of births exist or not, and no doubt can exist without a knowledge of either existence or non-existence. There can never be a doubt about the existence of that which you know to be non-existent. It does not exist. This is not a doubt, but a certainty. This is why I said that, should you be doubtful, say that you do not know whether the eighty-four lakhs of births exist or not. To arrive at once at the conclusion that they do not exist because it is doubtful whether they do exist is but a shocking manifestation of ignorance. In our discussion upon reincarnation we will set ourselves to dispel this doubt. Here we shall say this much—that when the number of eighty-four lakhs is definitely given, it would be wise to believe in it. Of him who does not admit the

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fact of reincarnation in any manner, whether partly or incompletely, directly or indirectly, I ask: "Are the eighty-four lakhs of births mentioned in the religious book of any other religious community of any country of which we know the history?" Can either the philosophy of Cārvāka,[1] or the Koran or Bible, proclaim boldly that the Jīva takes eighty-four lakhs of births? Whose sight can stretch to the extremity of the universe, so as to be able to penetrate through the molecules and atoms of the fourteen worlds—namely, Bhūh, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Tapah, Satya, Atala, Vitala, Sutala, Talātala, Rasātala, Mahātala, and Pātāla,[2] and thus gaining knowledge of the nature of every Jīva with grave solemnity affirm and say: "Jīva has eighty-four lakhs of births. True, true, true again—true, there is no doubt." Not to speak of pointing this out, how can one even boldly say that the number of births is eighty-four lakhs? The Jīva, through change of the curtain of memory in every birth, forgets its previous birth. Its memory is opened and closed. It is not, then, within its power of intelligence to say with certainty either by philosophy, science, perception, or inference, that the number of births is eighty-four lakhs. Only that Dharma and that Śāstra can affirm this, which takes its birth in the heart whose substance is will of Her who is the infinite and eternal Intelligence,[3] who dwells in the hearts of all Jīvas who are manifested with Her breath.[4] Who can measure the extent of the births of the Jīva but that Śāstra which has emanated from the mouth of Ānandamayī[5] Herself, at whose feet this small world is but a plaything for Her eternal play? It is only that Śāstra which dances with joy at the sight of the play of creation, preservation, and destruction taking place at every twinkling of the eye which can boldly assert that the number of births is eighty-four

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[1] Sceptic and atheist.

[2] The worlds from Bhūh (the earth) to Satyaloka are the upper world, and from Atala to Pātāla the nether worlds, which according to some accounts must be distinguished from the Hells, which lie between earth and the nether world.

[3] Caitanya—the supreme is Sat (existence), Cit (intelligence, consciousness), and Ānanda (bliss). The Devī is Chinmayī (Lalitā, third hundred).

[4] The world is the out-breathing of the Supreme.

[5] A title of Devī, whose substance is bliss (*see post*).

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lakhs. If other Śāstras be astounded, let them remain so. You and I have no need to faint away on hearing that. At present merely understand this much: that as he who can count a thousand has surely known the mathematical sign for that number, so he who can assert the number of eighty-four lakhs of births has surely seen them.

REASONING ON THE SCRIPTURE

You may have heard that a reasonable saying should be accepted even from a boy, and that discussion without reasoning causes loss of Dharma. But perhaps you have not had the leisure to discern what is the subject of that reasoning, and what kind of reasoning it is. The reasoning by which the Śāstra asks you to discuss is that reasoning which is within the control of your intellect—the reasoning of practical Śāstras helpful to discussion. How can you, with worldly reasoning, prove the truth of that unworldly spiritual Śāstra which, if studied and followed with constancy, will develop the intellect and will, and when Siddhi is attained by such Sādhana, open the portals of the super-sensual principle[1] which is within you? Do not lament because you have intellect, nor be ashamed because you cannot come to any decision without it. It is true that you have an intellect, but the pity of it is that you have not the intelligence to understand what sort of intellect it is. You may feel sorry and ashamed, but that will not open the lock. If you put too much pressure, the key will be broken, and even a Bengal lock[2] will not open. This is why I was saying that if you proceeded to open the lock of spiritual principles with the key of worldly reasoning, even the play of native intelligence will cease, and, being unable what to decide, you will find yourself at loss in everything.[3] For this reason the Śāstra has, after careful consideration, and taking the oath upon its head, said: "Do not attempt to deal by argument with things which are beyond the range of thought."

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[1] Atīndriya tattva.

[2] That is, locks manufactured in Bengal, which are (or were) of inferior quality.

[3] Literally, "to fall off from here and be lost from there."

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What, again, may be asked, is the necessity for a Śāstra, in respect of a matter which you and I can decide by argument and discussion? That is called Śāstra which deals with things beyond the reach of the senses, which are unthought of, unseen, and unattained by you and me. Where direct vision is blind and inference lame, there Śāstra alone reigns supreme. The fact that you and I have got eyes does not enable you and I to see what the animals moving in the unfathomable depths of ocean see. The power of sight is different in that kingdom from ours. You and I are blind in this respect, despite our eyes. Similarly you and I have not the privilege to behold that which the Ṛṣis, seers of deep truths immersed in the Divine bliss,[1] have seen.

Many people are heard to say in argument as follows: "How can those whose minds are constantly occupied with the thought of the feet of the Devatā of their heart in Nirvikalpa Samādhi Yoga,[2] by the complete immersal of their own mind and Prakṛti[3] in Paramātmā,[4] find time to observe also the physical principles[5] governing the molecules and atoms[6] of the untold millions of universes,[7] each of which is composed of fourteen worlds? How, again, can Yogis,[8] Ṛṣis, and Munis[9] whose state is one in which the illusion of a dual existence disappears through their acquirement of non-dualistic truths,[10] find time to turn their eyes from Brahman to observe the Brahmāṇḍa?"[11] Brahman, you say, cannot be seen unless the Brahmāṇḍa is forgotten. The Brahmāṇḍa cannot be seen unless the Brahman is forgotten. You argue, therefore, that it is impossible to harmonize these two mutually conflicting statements. We, too, do not deny the difficulty, and, although this is not the place for an elaborate explanation, we will briefly refer to one point.

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[1] Brahmānanda.
[2] Ecstasy. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] The Supreme Spirit.
[5] Vastutattva.
[6] Aṇu and paramāṇu.
[7] Brahmāṇḍa, "Egg of Brahma."
[8] Adepts in Yoga.
[9] Seers and sages.
[10] Advaita tattva.
[11] Universe.

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Poets have said that if a pearl and a javā[1] flower are brought together, the red hue of the javā will redden the pearl, but the white lustre of the latter will not whiten the former. This is because the pearl is free of all impurity,[2] while the javā is not so. A thing which is naturally transparent will take the reflection of other things, whilst that which is not so may itself be reflected but cannot receive reflection. For instance, my face is reflected in a mirror, but the mirror is not reflected in my face, because the mirror is pure, which my face is not. Similarly in a Brahmāṇḍa made impure by Māyā,[3] everything is impure. Only that one Brahman who is beyond Māyā is pure. The impure Brahmāṇḍa cannot receive a reflection of the pure Brahman, but is itself naturally reflected in it.

Looking at a spot of ground on the bank of some lake or river, we see only the verdant land and clumps of trees, but not the stretch of water. Yet the instant we withdraw our sight from the bank and cast it on the water, we see everything therein —the trunks, the tops, the branches, twigs, fruits, and flowers of the trees, and their very roots, together with the verdant land on which they stand. We see also the immense zone of the firmament covered with countless clusters of stars. We thus see all things one after another displayed in the lake. But that which faces upwards on land faces downwards in the water, and that which faces downwards on land faces upwards in the water. Similar is the vision of those who are immersed in the sea of truth.[4] Just as we can see everything up to the very zone of the firmament merely by looking at the water of the lake and without casting our eyes around it, so the Ṛṣis, without glancing at the Brahmāṇḍa produced by Māyā, cast their vision upon Brahmamayī,[5] and see in Her person, whose substance is a mass of conscious bliss,[6] endless millions of worlds in the hollow of

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[1] The scarlet hibiscus, the flower of the Tāntriks.

[2] Literally, "is dirtless."

[3] Illusion, the power of the Supreme whereby It makes Itself to appear other than It really is. Māyā enshrouds and conceals the nature of the Ātman.

[4] Tattva. [5] The Devī. [6] Cidghanānanda.

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every hair of Her body,[1] now appearing and now disappearing in each twinkling of the eyes, as it were bubbles in water. No need is there for them to take any wearying journey, nor to waste their lives, nor to pass over the courtyard[2] of the world so hard to traverse. But they merely, by the eye of wisdom,[3] in the bed of meditation,[4] in the house of Sādhana, see that beauteous dream of the three worlds, and that truth[5] to which the Jīva cannot attain even in its causal body, and which, notwithstanding the break of ecstasy,[6] they cannot forget. Their vision has, however, this peculiarity: whatever you and I, acquainted with the scientific truths of the gross world, see and think of appears to us to be elevated and of uplifted face, as if nothing else in the samsāra was more elevated than they; but, on the other hand, the devotees, looking at the reflection cast upon the waves of blood of the causal sea in the womb of Bhagavatī, perceive that that which is elevated in this world is low at the feet of Brahmamayī, and that whatever was downcast in the world has, on approaching the Mother, received Her caress and joyfully lifted its head on seeing the Brahman aspect of Ānandamayī. The same things are there in both cases. What was seen on land appears again in water, but reversed through change of the medium through which we view it. For those who only see the Brahmāṇḍa in the Brahmāṇḍa, what can be higher to them than it? But those who have seen the Brahmāṇḍa in Brahman have seen the Queen of Queens, Brahmamayī, sitting on a throne made of all the highest things of the Brahmāṇḍa from the regions of the polestar, moon, and Brahmā[7] to the cloud-piercing peak of Mount Sumeru[8] on earth. Seeing that all-pervading[9] play

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[1] The Kāmika is quoted as saying that there are 224 worlds, which should be meditated upon as if they were the hairs on the body of the Lord. This is the Bhuvana method. Others are the "letter" method of meditation on fifty letters, as on the skin of the Lord of Devas; the mantra method of meditation on the blood of Śiva by means of Mantra; the "word" method, where they stand for the flesh of the blood-vessels of the Lord; and the "Tattva" method where the thirty-six Tattvas, beginning with the earth, are the forms of Śiva' sinews, bone, and marrow (see Bhāskararāya Commentary, Lalitā, v. 52).

[2] That is, the surface. [3] Jñāna.

[4] Dhyāna (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*). [5] Tattva. [6] Samādhi.

[7] Dhruvaloka, Chandraloka, and Brahmaloka.

[8] Mount Meru, wherein is the pole of the earth. [9] Virāṭ Tattva.

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of Śakti which makes the universe stare with wonder, Devas and Ṛṣis have bowed their heads to earth, and said: "Obeisance, obeisance to the Devī who, as consciousness,[1] pervades the entire universe."

"Is it necessary to say, O great Devī, that She lives in the bodies of all living creatures when She is present in the form of energy,[2] even in such lifeless things as stocks and stones? There is no place in the world where the substance of Mahāmāyā is not."

Man, how dare we expect that that divine[3] sight of theirs and this carnal[4] sight of yours and mine will be the same? The Śāstra says that this play of the universe is nothing but the play of the waves in the sea of consciousness. Just as those who have gone to the sea, need, in looking at the sea, make no special effort to see its waves, so those who had seen Brahmamayī had not to make any effort to see the Brahmāṇḍa. They did not see the universe with the help of telescopes or of vehicles on land, in water, or in air. When they saw the Īśvari[5] of the universe it was then they saw the latter[6] also resting at Her feet. The difference between the sight of those who nowadays display their knowledge of science by a discussion of the principles of matter[7] and that of the Ṛṣis is this: The former, in their short lives having seen but a small portion of the small world, gasp out with tired voices: "Who knows what lies beyond this?" However, on seeing this world-play, one only feels that wonderful indeed must be the nature,[8] of the real form of Her whose play it is, and that if one would have knowledge of that wonderful Śakti,[9] there are no better means in human life than to study the principles of the universe. It is here that Ṛṣis are wont to say that this sport is nothing wonderful for Her who is full of eternal and ever-novel play. The playful manifestation in the molecules and atoms of a single world counts for an incident scarcely worth mention

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[1] Caitanya.
[2] Tejas, which also denotes fire, brilliancy, glory, and energy.
[3] Daivī. [4] Jaivi, or sight pertaining to the Jīva.
[5] Feminine of Īśvara (Lord). Title of the Devī. [6] Tattva.
[7] Bhūtatattva. The Bhūta are the elements.
[8] Tattva. [9] Power.

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for Her upon whose mere glance[1] depend the creation, preservation, and destruction of countless millions of universes. The universe does not appear wonderful in the sight of him who has seen the primordial Śākti,[2] the source of birth of this perfect play. And therefore the Ṛṣis disregarding the Samsāra with its charming display of actors and acting, have sunk in the fathomless sea of the ocean of Her who, holding the thread of the universe in Her hand, makes all those actors act. They, after an attentive view and the attainment of Siddhi, have thrown up their hands, and cried and said: "Do not let your mind and heart be charmed with the varied beauty of this world. This pleasant illusion will not last for ever. As you hope for peace, surrender your mind and heart at the lovely lotus-feet of Ānandamayī playing on the breast of Sadānanda.[3] Cast off the threefold sorrow,[4] and you will then discover that millions of worlds move and move around every petal, every filament, every particle of pollen, of those lotus-feet, and then disappear immersed in the love-pollen of those lotuses."

To our ears these words, though true, appear somewhat strange. To disregard the joys and sorrows of the visible world, and to be immersed in the joy of the unseen Brahman, is a remote affair. For the present anyone who avers it seems to be an unsocial, witless fellow. This advice to run in search of something unseen, in disregard of the visible phenomenal samsāra, is thought to be as unbearable and inopportune as would be flippant talk to a person who, disconsolate and with flooding tears, is holding his dead child to his breast, or as would be a request to accompany a funeral procession to a young man adorned and joyful on his way to his marriage. Owing to the unacceptable nature of the advice, you and I consider the adviser mad; but the latter is not to be put off from his purpose by that.

Let us suppose that you and I do not know what acting is, but are present at a representation of the Rāmāyaṇa. The grief

[1] "The series of worlds arise and disappear with the opening and shutting of Her eyes" (Lalitā Sahasranāma, v. 66).

[2] Ādyā Śākti, the Devī as primordial source and manifestation of the Divine energy.

[3] Śiva, the ever Joyful.

[4] Tāpatraya (see *post*).

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of Kauśalyā, the death of Daśaratha, the lamentation of Sītā, the tears of Manḍodarī, move us to profuse tears. On the other hand, the heroic valour of Lakṣmaṇa, the world-subduing military skill of Rāmacandra, the pride of Indrajit, the war-cries of Rāvaṇa, fill us now with joy and delight, now with fear, astonishment, and awe. At the same time we observe that someone who is sitting in our midst, but whom we do not know, has been shaking his sides with laughter at the very same scenes. You and I will probably say that the man is mad, but that will not stop his laughter. I say that it does not matter whether or not you call the man mad. Still you ought to reflect why the man laughs. The place is the same, the scenes are the same, the subject is the same. But while all other people are laughing at one time and weeping at another, why does that one man alone constantly laugh? If we seek to know why this is so, we shall discover that there is only one cause for the laughing and weeping, and it is this: You and I have come to see the play without either knowing how to act or what acting is. But that man has come to it with the full knowledge of what acting is. To us Rāma and Rāvaṇa appear as real, and so we make a great display of weeping, and so on. But that man sees that Nīlāmbara Cakravarti[1] is playing the part of Rāvaṇa and that Pītāmbara Cakravarti[1] is crying in the part of Sītā. What to our eyes are Rāma and Sītā to him are Nīlāmbara and Pītāmbara, and so he is full of laughter. We become restless at the sight of the incidents in the play, but that man who sees what is at the back of them is calm. We are calling him mad, but you may be certain that he is forgiving us on account of our ignorance. The man whom we slight by repeatedly referring to him as "that man, that man, "is not mad. From the spiritual point of view, he it is who is possessed of the highest wisdom, and is the crest-gem of the race of devotees. He who knows that all things on the stage of Samsāra are merely the materials for the play is not, on seeing the performance, charmed with the acting, but is intoxicated with the blissful love of the actor and actress whose acting

[1] "Monsieur un tel."

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it is. Ṛṣis, though calm, are yet maddened by that love; and so they have told us not to waste this human birth, which is so difficult of attainment, by thinking of the little things of the Samsāra, but to think that thought only which will save us from all further thinking. And so, speaking to himself the Sādhaka has thus expressed the purpose of his heart:

"The time of life (Kāla) is past, death (Kāla) approaches;
let me repair to solitude.
In deep seclusion let me sing the glory of Kālakāminī." [1]

The day upon which you and I shall be on their side, and shall believe or attain the fitness for believing their word, on that day all thinking will be at an end. And we, too, shall understand that the Samsāra is but a mock representation, and that both the things we see, as well as the people themselves who see, are She, the Brahmamayī,[2] full of the bliss of the mass of consciousness who has entered the Samsāra as Jīva, and is revelling in this joyous play. But because you and I have not eyes to see, we say:

"What sort of a play is this of yours, O Mother? It is not a play, but the very father of imprisonment.
The first scene of the play is a gathering on the stage before the actor and actress.
Here the actor is nowhere to be found, so who can find the actress?
With the first act begins the play; next the scenes of a drama are required.
Here, be it the first act or the last, from beginning to end, the drama is full of scenes.
The scene in which the son appears is that in which the father disappears.
Instantly the curtain is dropped before the eye, and then who is the son, and who is the father?"

You and I have restless hearts, and so we become disconsolate with weeping. But the very same play raises waves of love in the heart of a calm devotee. Kamalākānta, the peaceful Sādhaka has therefore sung as follows:

"You know not, O mind, the highest cause
Śyāmā [2] is not always in the form of a woman.

[1] Śiva's spouse. [2] The Devī.

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At times assuming the colour of clouds,
She takes on the form of a man.
With dishevelled hair and sword in hand,
She strikes terror into the hearts of the sons of Danu.
At times She comes to the city of Vraja,[1] and, playing on the flute, captures the hearts of the women of Vraja.
At times, holding the three guṇas,[2] She creates, preserves, and destroys.
Oh! She binds Herself[3] with her son Māyā.[4]
The sufferings of the world She Herself endures.
In whatsoever form one thinks of Her, in that form She grants one's desires.
In a lotus in the lake of Kamalākānta's heart She appears."

It is for this, I was saying, that in what the Śāstra has said there is nothing to discuss, but there is ground for faith. Of Her to whom the Śāstra belongs, the Ṛṣis have said that that eternal highest Vidyā,[5] who is the sole first cause in samsāra both of bondage and liberation, is the creatrix of all creators.[6] The creative power of none surpasses Her who is the creatrix of all creators. Whether you and I understand it or not, the unfailing wheel of state of that Queen of Queens,[7] whose substance is will, is sure to turn in eighty-four lakhs of births of the Jīva. Should you ever after this ask why it should be so, and what is the reason for it, I shall not in reply need to say much, but will simply put you this question: What reason is there which establishes that the present birth has at all taken place? At base the reasoning is the same for all births. For reasoning which establishes this birth establishes that which follows it. If one section of a wheel turns, all sections turn at the same time. This is the law of Her nature. From Brahman, the Jīva who is His avatāra has come into this samsāra. There after wanderings and wanderings, it will again assume the aspect of Brahman

[1] That is, in the form of Kṛṣṇa.

[2] That is, the three "qualities" which form the substance of Prakṛti—namely, sattva, rajas, tamas (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[3] That is, in the person of Jīva. [4] Power of illusion.

[5] The Devī. [6] Īśvari of all Īśvaras. [7] Rājarājeśvarī.

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and be absorbed in the Parabrahman. This is the natural law in the world of Jīvas. In our discourse on the principles of reincarnation, we will enter into a detailed explanation as to the law under which, and the process by which, this will be accomplished.

Should, even after this, anyone say, "Everything ends with death. Who will then be born again?" to him also we shall explain in that discourse that he is probably ignorant of what life and death mean. He who knows the nature of life knows also that Jīva has no real death except that in Nirvāṇa.[1] What you and I speak of as death is but the death of the mind, and not the death of Jīva. In short, just as it is impossible to make a complete survey of a life in its various stages of boyhood, youth, manhood, old age, and so forth, so also it is impossible to judge of the justice or injustice of eighty-four lakhs of births, or even the justice or injustice of any single birth—which forms but a fraction of the entire life of a Jīva. Bhagavān Rāmacandra, crest-gem of the race of Raghu,[2] after killing all Rākṣasas[3] in Viśvāmitra's yajña,[4] threw Mārīca with the force of his arrows to the other side of the sea. On hearing this, a short-sighted, restless man might easily form the idea that Rāmacandra felt weak after slaying so large a number of Rākṣasas, and thus, while able with such strength as he still retained to throw Mārīca to a great distance from the seat of the sacrifice, was yet unable to kill him. But he who has read the whole of the Rāmāyaṇa from the Ayodhyākāṇḍa to the Āraṇyakāṇḍa[5] knows that Marīca reappears in the guise of a deer in the forest of Daṇḍaka at the time of Sītā's abduction and has at the same time understood whether Rāmacandra had strength or not. Bhagavan, dweller in Vaikuṇṭha, who ever relieves the burden of earth, there incarnated to carry out the work of the Devas—the killing of Rāvaṇa. It was because he knew that the work of destroying Rāvaṇa would, later on, have to be commenced through the

[1] When the Jīva ceases to exist *as such.*

[2] The solar race, celebrated in the Raghuvaṁśa.

[3] Demons.

[4] Sacrifice.

[5] The titles of the parts of the Rāmāyaṇa epic.

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same Mārīca, that Rāmacandra, instead of killing him, threw him to the other side of the sea. Had this not been so, no greater effort would have been needed to send Mārīca to the other side of the sea of existence[1] than to send him to the other side of the salt sea. To understand the deep mysteries underlying this play of Bhagavān, the dweller in hearts, it is necessary to know the incidents of the Āraṇyakāṇḍa; otherwise I should not understand more than this—that the Almighty had not sufficient strength in His body to enable Him to kill Mārīca.

Similarly, in order to judge of His justice or injustice towards Jīva in the Satya and Kali ages, I must know the history of all the ages to their final chapter Brahmakaivalya or Nirvāṇa. Then only can be considered the justice and injustice of the entire existence of Jīva. It is therefore the height of impudence to judge the justice of Her who is the eternal ever-present truth by a life of forty years' duration. If we are to judge His justice upon the strength of reasoning alone, why should we not suppose that it is the Sādhakas of the Satya, Treta, and Dvāpara ages who failed to acquire Siddhi and have therefore been reborn in the Kali age through the revolution of the wheel of time, and the attraction of the mass of their religious merits. This mass, which is nearly ripe, is about to bear fruit through the opportunities offered by place, time, and person. They, the children of the Mother, will again get up on Her lap. You say that Siddhi has been attained in one age, but I see that Siddhi has been attained in Kali, the fourth age, after austerities which have extended over three ages. The jack-fruit which ripens in the month of Aṣāḍha does not first grow in that month. It first grows in winter, increases in spring, and matures in summer. The bael fruit first grows in the month of Caitra. It also ripens in Caitra. From this fact a European eating the fruit, but who had never seen it growing, might draw the conclusion that the growth, death, and final dissolution of a bael fruit all took place in one and the same month; but a descendant of the Āryas living in India knows that:

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[1] Bhavasamudra.

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"In the month of Caitra the bael grows
In the month of Caitra it ripens.
In one Caitra it grows,
But in another Caitra it ripens."

ON MEETING SĀDHAKAS[1]

You may ask, "Why, then, is the number of Sādhakas so small in the Kali age?" But I reply: "Who says that it is small?" You may rejoin that if the number be not small, why do we not see them everywhere, in every village, in every city? I, however, say that the population of a country may be considered to be small if people are not seen everywhere in it, but the number of Sādhakas cannot on similar grounds be so considered. It has been already stated that the Creatrix of the universe, incarnated as Daughter, told Her father that "one in a thousand struggle for Siddhi, and perhaps only one amongst such thousand knows me in my true aspect." The same was said[2] to Arjuna by Bhagavān, the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra. She has again said: "It is only on attaining Siddhi after many births that Jīva reaches the highest station." Again: "Jīva attains to me only upon the acquisition of knowledge after many births." In the Niruttara Tantra it is said: "The root of knowledge is that which relates to the union of Śiva and Śakti. Knowledge of Śakti is acquired after many births. O Devī, without a knowledge of Śakti, Nirvāṇa can never be attained."

How, then, dare you and I expect to see crowds of travellers upon a road on which the Śāstra says they are so very scarce. There is a full number of Sādhakas even should but one man in a hundred thousand become such. Wise men have said that a ruby is not to be had in every hill, and that every elephant's head does not contain a pearl. A saint[3] is not to be met with everywhere, and sandal does not grow in every forest. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa told Uddhava, crest-gem of devotees, that when a Muni[4] passes who is calm, free of malice, and equal mind he

[1] A Sādhaka is he who does sādhana (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*), a devotee. [2] In the Bhagavadgītā. [3] Sādhu.
[4] A sage or saint. Uddhava, son of Devabhāga, was versed in Yoga.

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follows him, hoping to be sanctified by the touch of the dust of his feet. What impurity could attach to Him, the utterance of Whose name by a devotee sanctifies the three worlds,[1] so that He should need to purify Himself by touching the dust of the latter's feet? It was no impurity, but intoxication caused by love for the devotee, which led Bhagavān, in his desire to proclaim his greatness, to lose Himself, and to show that, were it possible for Him to be tainted with impurity, even He could regain purity by touching the devotee. Realize from this how rare a thing a true devotee is. Another Śāstra has said: "As a cow runs after its calf, so Śiva and Gauri[2] run after him who repeats, 'Mahādeva,[3] Mahādeva, Mahādeva'." Why, what reason has the consort of Bhavāni,[4] the Creator of all, the shade of Whose feet supports the Brahmāṇḍa, to run after His devotees? The necessity was none other than that of showing that where there is a devotee there He Himself is.

It is said in the Tantra that "all admit that the places of pilgrimage[5] are the cause of purity. But, O Girijā,[6] in very truth, I say that it is the Sādhaka of the Kulācāra[7] rite who gives purity even to all such places of pilgrimage. Blessed is the mother[8] of a Kaula![9] Blessed are his father and kinsmen and relatives! Blessed are those who have conversed with him! In heaven the ancestors of a master of Kula[10] sing: 'In our race will be born a master of Kula.'" In the Utpatti Tantra it is

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[1] The earth, the upper and nether worlds.

[2] A name of Devī as spouse of Śiva.

[3] "The great God" Śiva. In the Aṣṭamūrti, Śiva is so called in his form of the moon.

[4] A name of the Devī as spouse of Bhava (Śiva).

[5] Tīrtha, holy shrines, such as Gaya, or the temple of Juggernath at Puri, with which India is studded.

[6] Daughter of the mountain—a title of the Devī as daughter of the Mountain King.

[7] The way of the Kaulas, one of the divisions of Tāntrik worshippers.

[8] The mother is always, by way of honour, placed first and before the father.

[9] One who follows Kulācāra (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[10] One who is versed in Kulācāra.

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said: "Devī, wherever a Vīra[1] or a Divya[2] resides, there also are all the sacred shrines.[3] O Thou who art desired of the Vīra, there is no doubt that a Vīra, though having a human body, is in flesh and blood a Devata[4] and Śiva Himself. O Devī, what fear can he have who lives where a Vīra lives, and under his protection? The protection of a worldly[5] Vīra relieves us of worldly fear, but the protection of the spiritual[6] Vīra relieves one of the fear of famine, disease, the king, and death. It relieves of the three forms of fear—namely, that which arises from troubles of the body, senses, and mind,[7] from external material objects[8] and from all superhuman beings."[9]

In the Kulārṇava Tantra[10] it is said:

"My beloved, in all the world the sight of a Kulācārya[11] is indeed rare, and is only obtained after enjoyment of the fruits of a vast heap of religious merit." Should even a Caṇḍāla[12] or a person of still lower caste become attached to Kuladharma,[13] then the very memory of him, the recitation of his name and qualities, the singing of his praises, sight of, and talk with him purifies a Jīva. "O noble lady, you and I for ever reside there where he who has a knowledge of Kulācāra lives. It is not on Mount Kailāsa,[14] Sumeru,[15] or Mandāra[16] that I always

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[1] Men are by the Tantras divided into three classes or temperaments: Paśu ("animal"), in whom the dark, inert quality (Guṇa) of tamas predominates and who is bound by the bonds; Vīra (hero), or those in whom the active quality (rajas) prevails; and divya (celestial), in whom the pure (Sattva) quality prevails. Worship varies, and is adapted to the temperament of the worshipper (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*). [2] See *post.*

[3] Tīrtha, see *ante.*

[4] Deva. The Vīra here referred to is the Siddha Vīra.

[5] Laukika, or hero in the ordinary English sense.

[6] Pāramārthika. [7] Ādhyātmika.

[8] Ādhibhautika—*e.g.*, fear of injury from the elements or other men.

[9] Ādhidaivika, such as Devas, ghosts, demons, etc.

[10] Chap. ix. [11] Master of Kaula doctrine.

[12] One of the lowest castes, rag-pickers, cleaners of privies, etc.

[13] The Dharma or doctrine of the Kaulas, a division of Tāntrik worshippers.

[14] The paradise of Śiva.

[15] *Vide ante*, and chap. ii, Viṣṇu Purāṇa. The Devī is Merunilayā (residing on Mount Meru) (Lalitā S., v. 148). The Śrīcakra has, it is said, three aspects —Bhūmi, Kailāśa, Meru; the last being when it is identified with the sixteen 'Nitya Deities.' [16] Used as a staff to churn the Ocean for Amṛta.

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live. I ever abide there where Sādhakas versed in Kulatattva[1] are." (The meaning of this is that He would rather abandon his abode on these mountains than the companionship of Kaulikas.[2] The devoted Sādhaka will know from this which is the greater—the glory of Mount Kailāsa or that of a Kaula.) "The place where a great Tāntrika[3] lives should be visited and seen with care, even if it should be remoter than the remote, for you and I live in joy there."

The meaning of this is: It may be asked why one should take so much trouble to see a man. Lest such an evil notion should seize the naturally weak heart of man, Bhagavān has clearly given us to understand that we should not desist from visiting a Kulasādhaka, considering him to be a mere man. It is not a human body that the Kaulika possesses. The Śiva Śakti aspect[4] is that of which the Kaulikas are worshippers, and is that which the world is so eager to behold. In that aspect Śiva and Śakti unite and, as Ardhanārīśvara,[5] live in the enjoyment of perfect joy in the body of the Kulasādhaka. To see him, therefore, is the same as seeing Their undivided and united form.

"If a Guru of Kulatattva lives even afar, visit him, but not a paśu,[6] even if he be near." By the term "Kaulika," worshippers should understand a Sādhaka of Kulācāra,[7] the characteristics of which we shall explain in our discourse on Ācāratattva. By Paśu is meant a person bound by the eight fetters of shame, etc.[8] "Sacred is the land in which a master of Kula is born. By seeing and honouring a Kaulika one gives deliverance to thrice seven generations."

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[1] Kaula knowledge. [2] Kaulas. [3] Mahāpuruṣa.

[4] Mūrti, or form. [5] The bisexual form of Īśvara.

[6] *Vide ante*, See *post.* See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[7] One and the highest division of Tāntrik worshippers, whose way of life (ācāra) is according to Kula doctrine.

[8] See *ibid.* The reference is to the classification of the Kulārṇava Tantra. The "afflictions" which are variously numbered, are given as five in the Linga Purāṇa. The Devī Bhāg. Pr. says: "In the knower of truth they sleep. In the Yogis they are burned up. In those attached to the world they arise unimpeded."

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"Seeing a master of Kula born in their family and living in their house, his ancestors in heaven say, 'At length we shall obtain the highest abode.' As cultivators with craving eyes pray for rain, so the ancestors in heaven pray with eager hearts that a son or grandson of their family may be initiated in the truths of Kula doctrine. Then blessed will that sinless great man be in Samsāra."

"Beloved after death, masters in Kula joyfully come to me. When a great Kaulika comes to the Kaulika house,[1] Yoginīs,[2] with Yogis, come to see and welcome him." "Even Pitṛs and Devatās seek the protection and pay homage to the great Kaula Yogī. And for this great men devoted to the knowledge of Kula should be honoured and worshipped."

"Devī, such sinful men as after the adoration of Thyself fail to worship Thy devotees never win favour of Thee."

"When Sādhakas place the Naivedya[3] before me, I accept it by sight only. But, O lotus-eyed, I eat it by the mouths of the saintly devotees."

"Devī, there is no doubt that if one worships Thy devotee he worships Me, so that he who would do that which is pleasing to Me adores Thy devotees only."

"Whatever is done in the name of Kula disciples is done in the name of Deva. All Devatās love Kula. Therefore should Kaulikas be worshipped."

"Pārvatī, even if in any other place,[4] I am worshipped with great reverence, I am not so well pleased as when a great Kaulika is worshipped."

The fruit which he cannot obtain even by pilgrimage, austerities,[5] gifts, sacrifices,[6] and voluntary religious practices[7] that the Jīva can obtain by the worship of a Kaulika. O, Ambikā,[8] even if a Kaulika (not to speak of any other) dishonours

[1] That is, to Śiva's abode. [2] Female yogis.

[3] A full plate of offerings to the Deva, consisting of rice, ghee, vegetables, honey, etc.

[4] That is, than in the person of a great Kaulika.

[5] Tapasyā (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*). [6] Yajñā (*ibid*).

[7] Vrata (*ibid.*) Voluntary, as distinguished from those which are obligatory (Nitya).

[8] Mother, title of the Devī (see *post*).

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a master of Kaula, all his gifts, sacrifices, homas,[1] austerities, worship, and recitation of mantra[2] are of no avail."

As a reward for what religious merit can worldly creatures like you and I expect to meet those unworldly great men whose greatness the Śāstras have declared by lakhs of such evidence? To what hill, to what forest hermitage, to what great cremation ground, to what great shrine[3] have we been? In what Muni's hermitage,[4] in what saint's[5] humble abode, in what Daṇḍī's[6] maṭha,[7] in what Brahmacāri's[8] abode have we sought protection? What mantra have we recited according to the rules of Japa?[9] What Devatā have we worshipped? In what Vrata[10] have we been initiated? Along what path have we advanced? Restraint of mind and body, contentment, forbearance, meditation, concentration of thought and process towards ecstatic contemplation[11]—which of these have we practised? Listening,[12] thinking,[13] and constant meditation,[14] which of these have we done? Of discrimination,[15] dispassion[16] what have we understood? In the name of Dharma open your heart and say, brother, what have we done to deserve to meet the saintly Sādhakas whom even Devas rarely meet? You will say, may be, we have not done anything, but still we honour and revere them, bow to them, and anxiously pray to meet them. That is not altogether untrue. We pray in our minds, but what of our actions? Had we acted, we should not have remained satisfied with mere prayer, but we should have run with passionate hearts without looking at the path, and having found him, we would have prostrated ourselves and clasped his feet, and said: "Lord, I have made no provision. How shall I be saved?" Say truly, O brother, has anyone's heart wept in this fashion? If it had, it would not have had to weep any more,

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[1] The sacrifice made by pouring clarified butter into fire.
[2] Japa (see *ibid*).
[3] Mahāpīṭha.
[4] See *post*.
[5] Sādhu.
[6] A class of ascetics.
[7] Monastic institution.
[8] Celibate ascetic.
[9] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.
[10] *Ibid*.
[11] Samādhi.
[12] Śravaṇa.
[13] Manana.
[14] Nididhyāsana.
[15] That is, between the real and the unreal.
[16] Vairāgya: unattachment to worldly things.

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The pious poet Dāśarathi Ray has, on the subject of the coming[1] of the Mother of the world,[2] said:

"My child, the mother says, you will come to know,
You will no longer have to weep.
Incessant tears have brought an end to weeping,
The child who clings to and calls 'mother,'
That child holds the mother fast.
The mother is ashamed to let it weep.
Mother does not care for the children who mix with others
And go about laughing and playing.
She does not go to them and easily obtains leisure,
And takes the child who weeps on her lap."

O Thou who art full of mercy for the poor, tell me, O Mother, when will the day come for Thy Sādhaka, when I shall weep as I ought to weep for Thee, the day on which Thou wilt come and say: "No longer weep. Incessant tears have brought an end to weeping?"

A patient in delirium suffering from Sānnipātika fever[3] feels no sorrow. Hari, Hari,[4] shall we learn to weep? If, when we are at worldy work, anyone should happen to stand before us in the dress of a Sādhaka we instantly leave the work, and with all the frown and fury at our command, expel him from our house and then find peace. Being such as we are, will our sinful hearts weep to obtain Sādhakas, instead of weeping for Hell. O thou Dweller in the Heart! O thou Saviour! Dost thou know, O Mother, how long it will be before we are delivered of this sin? With a heart such that the very attempt to speak of it makes me fear because of the fearful visions of sin which it raises before my eyes, I am prepared to dishonour Śāstra, Sādhu, and Dharma. With such a heart again I proceed to meet Sādhus. How great is my shamelessness! To say that were there living any saintly Sādhaka, he would surely one day or other meet me in my house, argues great vanity on my part.

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[1] Āgamanī. [2] Jagadambā, a title of the Devī.
[3] A violent fever, said to affect the blood and produce delirium.
[4] Name of Viṣṇu.

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What a ridiculous display of impudent presumption![1] Why, what Indras, Candras, Vāyus or Varuṇas, have you and I become that we should meet Sādhakas without having to stir from our houses? You will say, you have learning, wealth, and a following. You have. But what is that to the Sādhaka? It is our mistake which leads us to tell him we have learning. Shall I speak of learning to him who, through the grace of Mahāvidyā, holds the eight forms of Siddhi[2] in the palm of his hand? Shall I boast of my wealth to those who, possessing the priceless wealth of the feet of Tārā,[3] consider even the position of an Indra as of no worth? I want to show the strength of my following to the son of that Mother, Creatrix of all, Whose very glance commands the service of everyone from Śankara[4] Himself to the molecules and atoms of the Brahmāṇḍa! How mighty is the strength of my intellect! And even should we, whilst sitting at home, or going to places of pilgrimage, or moving about cremation grounds or places of execution, ever come across Sādhakas are we able to recognize them? Have we come to know Devatā because He is installed in every house?[5] When, after killing Hiraṇyakaśipu, Bhagavān Nṛsimhadeva[6] wished to grant a boon to Prahlāda,[7] crest-gem of devotees, the latter at once said: "As worldly persons who are unable to discriminate the unreal from the real, form lasting attachments to wife, children, and other things, so often as they willingly or unwillingly constantly think of them, so may I constantly remember Thee. May my love for Thee never forsake me." Bhagavān, the abode of the supreme love, was then standing in a visible form before him, but yet Prahlāda did not say: "I want Thee." Without seeking

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[1] Devas of the firmament, moon, wind, and water.

[2] The eight great powers, as to which see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[3] One of the ten great forms (Daśa Mahāvidyā) of the Devī (see Daśa Mahāvidyā, Upāsanā Rahasya, by Prosanna Kumar Śāstri).

[4] Śiva.

[5] Referring to the image (Pratimā) installed in Hindu households.

[6] Viṣṇu in his man-lion incarnation, undertaken for the destruction of the atheist Hiraṇyakaśipu, who had cruelly tortured his son Prahlāda because the latter was a devotee of Viṣṇu.

[7] For his great devotion to the Deva.

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Bhagavān himself, he prayed that he might have devotion towards Him. For, Prahlāda, the crest-gem of those who have true knowledge,[1] knew that the presence of Bhagavān was not rare, since He pervades the universe. He knew, however, that what is rare is devotion to His feet. To him who desires to possess devotion, the presence or absence of Bhagavān are the same, since there can be no realization of Bhagavān without piety. But if a man have devotion, Bhagavān, even though he were at a distance of hundred crore of yojanas[2] must appear before him wherever, and in whatsoever form, he desires. Just as the water of a river when mingling with the sea cannot be distinguished from it, so the existence of a devotee mingling with Bhagavān cannot be distinguished from Him. Just as the rare presence of Bhagavān is obtained through devotion, so pious men too, though rare in every place, are subject to control by love. Again, just as through want of piety we are a hundred yojanas from the presence of Bhagavān, though he is always before us, so we are unable to discern the real self of a saintly Sādhaka, a devotee of Bhagavān, even if we meet him. We see with our physical eyes, but our eyes of wisdom are ever blind. The Tantra Śāstra has said that he alone is dear to the Mother of the world,[3] whose heart naturally rejoices with love at the sight of Kulasādhakas,[4] in the same way as the heart naturally rejoices at the sight of wife, children, and friends.

Now, to speak truly, do I look at Sādhakas with eyes open with such joy and softened with such love? If I did, how could my heart forsake their company and be charmed by that of kith and kin? And why does my heart long for the latter even after I have seen a Sādhu? The reason is, that a saint is saintly, but my vision is unsaintly,[5] and is therefore a hindrance instead of being a help towards meeting Sādhakas. Say now, is it not a great sin to think that there are no Sādhakas merely because we do not see them in every city or village? Whether we see them

[1] Literally, persons proficient in tattva.

[2] A crore is 10,000,000 and a yojana is about eight miles.

[3] Jagadambā.

[4] Worshippers according to Kulācāra.

[5] A Sādhu is Sādhu, but the vision is Asādhu.

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or not, do not widen your own path to Hell by saying that there are no Sādhakas in the world. Do not also be astounded to hear that in the Kali age Sādhakas who follow the Tāntrik form of worship attain Siddhi in one lifetime. At the very moment when you and I are virulently criticising the subject of Sādhakas, be sure that at that moment hundreds of Sādhakas in the boundless kingdom of the universe are making their births blessed, their lives blessed, and the world blessed by clasping to their hearts the feet of Her who gives success to all purposes. Blessed are we who, being born in Bhāratavarṣa,[1] made holy by the touch of their feet, are able to gratify ourselves by the taking of their names.

[1] India.

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CHAPTER II

WHAT IS THE NECESSITY FOR THE TANTRAS WHEN THERE IS THE VEDA ?

Now we come to the doubt we have mentioned — namely: "Why, seeing that there is the Veda, was the Tantra Śāstra created ?" In the first place, we object to the objection itself. The question why the Tantra Śāstra was created comes next. We ask why this question has arisen ? Perhaps the modern educated community of fastidious critics will be astonished to hear us ask this question. The reason for their astonishment lies in our assertion that it is not possible that the Śāstra should be created. The Śāstra in our opinion is an eternal thing. I know that you will probably say: "What orthodoxy! what blindness! what shocking superstition !" It does not matter if you do. Just as it is blind faith to be partial to one side without heeding the reasons which really exist in favour of the other, so it is scepticism to rely on mistaken inferences in total disregard of the reasons which exist against them. In your opinion it is orthodoxy to speak of the Śāstra as an unerring and eternal thing, but in mine it is scepticism to deny it. We shall therefore at once proceed to investigate that which, if disregarded, is scepticism, and if regarded, is orthodoxy.

In the first place the root and cause of dispute is that, while in your opinion the Śāstra was prepared after a view of the world and in accordance with it, in my opinion the world was constructed on a view of the Śāstra and in accordance with it. Consequently, while in your opinion man is the author of the Śāstra, in mine the Śāstra has no author but only revealers — namely, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara,[1] and after them the succession of Ṛṣis. To this perhaps the philosophic Pandits of our own

[1] Śiva.

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country will take some exception. For they not improbably have heard, or read in the Veda, that the Veda,[1] Vedāṅga,[2] and Vedānta[3] all emanated from the mouth of Paraméśvara Himself. We do not deny this, but would point out that the very Veda which they know to be the language of Parameśvara has been described to be Brahman Itself by its Revealers, those three most worshipful Devas.

In the Vṛhannīla Tantra[4] it is said:

"Daughter of the mountain! know the Veda to be Brahman Itself. The Veda has no author, but is self-manifested. Of yore the Veda was sung by Bhagavān to Svayambhū Brahmā.[5] From Mahādeva Himself[6] to the Ṛṣis all are, age after age, the remembrancers of the Veda, but none, is its author."

The Śāstra says that the Ṛg Veda and other Vedas came out with the breath of Brahma. Many consider this to be strong evidence of Parameśvara's authorship of the Veda. But it is not that, but evidence of the revelation of the Veda. Because the Veda was breathed out by Brahma, it does not follow that He was its author, for no one is the author of his own breath. We are simply instruments of inspiration. None of us is their creator. For he who can create breath is indestructible even in the great dissolution of things.[7] Brahma's body, unlike our own, is not made of gross matter consisting of the five elements. That body of His is all Himself, full of the play of eternal consciousness. It is some particular part of Himself which has emanated from Him as Veda in the form of breath. This is why the Śāstra has said: "Daughter of the mountain, know the Veda to be Brahma Himself."

Bhagavān, though capable of creating all things, is incapable of creating another like Himself — that is, something which is not Him but is yet similar to Him. Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Gaṅgā, Viṣṇu, Durgā, Kālī, whomsoever you may mention, all are

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[1] The scriptures of the Hindus—Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma, and Atharva Vedas. It has been said that the Tantra is a fifth Veda.

[2] See *post*.

[3] Doctrine of the Vedās (Upaniṣads): the subject of the philosophy (darśana) so named.

[4] See also Rudra Yāmala, chap. iv.

[5] The self-born.

[6] Śiva.

[7] Mahāpralaya.

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Himself. You cannot point to anyone who is different from, and yet is like, Him. Had there been, or could have been, another like Him, he would never have been the sole Mistress [1] without a second.[2] As I can only appear and disappear with my own selfness, but cannot create another like myself, so Brahma, too, cannot create the Veda, which is but another aspect of Himself. He merely reveals the Veda as His expiration at the beginning of creation, and withdraws it as His inspiration at the time of the great dissolution. The Śāstra has therefore said: "In respect of the sayings of a man, it is permissible to inquire whether there be error or not, but in the case of the Veda, as it has no author, the question of error does not arise at all."

Here someone may say that, if that be so, Parameśvara's creation itself is an impossibility, for if you and I, and every other Jīva are all He, whom then does He create ? If, however, creation by Brahma becomes impossible, we are not at all afraid. Why should the descendants of Āryas be astonished to hear that "there is no creation," when all their Śāstras freely say that, in a real spiritual sense, there is no creation, preservation and destruction by Brahma, all such being a mere illusive display ? As a matter of fact, although in a real sense there is no creation, yet for us Jīvas subject to Māyā, of which we are the product, creation undoubtedly exists. But the Veda was not created even in the sense of that which we call creation. Just as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and the other incarnations are the eternal Brahman, so is the Veda. Just as It, although self-manifest, manifested Itself in the womb of Kauśalyā [3] or Devakī [4] by means of its Māyā; so also the Veda, though self-manifest, appeared in the heart of Bhagavān, and came out with His breath at the will of Her whose very substance is will. The Vedas, Purāṇas, Tantras, and other Śāstras, are self-manifest and self-evident. Language, which is the gross form of sound, is its own author.[5] It matters very little if at the first hearing these things seem impossible.

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[1] Ādhīśvarī.

[2] Advitīya.

[3] Mother of Rāma.

[4] Mother of Kṛṣṇa.

[5] That is sound in the subtle state and which exists in gross form as speech (Vaikhari) is uncreated.

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In our discussion as to the principles of Mantra, we shall proceed to decide this point according to the Śāstras. For the moment the Sādhaka will excuse me a few intervening Chapters.

Here let us understand what harm will result if the Dharma Śāstra of the Āryas is supposed to be of human origin. What is that defect for fear of which it has been declared to be self-manifest and emanent with the breath of Iśvara ? We reply not for fear of any defect. The Veda is called self-manifest because it is so. It is not for fear of darkness that we admit the fact that light gives lustre. Whether darkness be present or not, it is for ever evident that a light is self-manifest. That which cannot be manifested by another, but which itself makes manifest all things, is called self-manifest. The Śāstra says: "There is no need to sweeten by means of something else a thing which is sweet by nature, and which imparts sweetness to things which are not sweet, nor is there anything which can impart sweetness to that which is naturally sweet. We sweeten things like milk, cream and curd with gur,[1] sugar-candy, honey and the like. But there is no need to sweeten honey in a similar way; nor is there anything in the world which can sweeten honey. We reveal the courtyard and interior of a house, and all things in it by a light. But to reveal that light another is not required. The light reveals itself, and is therefore called self-manifest. Light alone of all things in the world possesses the power to reveal. Light is itself luminous; what else, then, can reveal it ? Like honey and light, the Veda also is self-manifest. The Veda reveals the principles of all things in the Brahmāṇḍa, but is itself its own revealer. Who can reveal that which reveals all ? It is not possible to have something which is beyond everything. Even if for fear that there may be darkness we do not admit the existence of light, yet light, revealing itself, makes visible and thus destroys darkness. Similarly, if for fear of any imperfection we do not admit that the Śāstra is self-manifest, yet the Sāstra, revealing itself, makes plain and thus removes the imperfection. That imperfection is this: Āryan philosophers have said: "What is free from mistake, error, and deceit, that is authoritative."[2]

[1] Molasses.

[2] Āpta.

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Śāstras are authoritative sayings — that is, the sayings of Śāstra are free from mistake, error, and deceit. When we hear it said that man is the author of Dharma Śāstra, it seems to us as if light and darkness were holding a consultation. It is evident that while man is erring, Śāstra is unerring. Śāstra never makes a mistake. Man is always doing so. Śāstra is the eternal seat of mercy. Man the source of deceit. Śāstra has no beginning or end, Man is ever subject to birth and death. Man is the slave of his senses. Śāstra guides to the supersensual. Śāstra is the unselfish Guru [1] of the world. Man is a very worm of selfishness. It is a baseless fancy to try to bring about an agreement between these mutually conflicting conditions.

Many, made restless by the inconstant waves of glittering physical science, are wont to say that Śāstra is nothing but the outcome and evidence of extensive experience. Someone, it is supposed, has said, or written down, as much as he has seen. From this it follows that whether the principles contained in Śāstra be true or not, great credit must be given to him who spoke it. We, too, are not niggardly in giving such credit, but we find it very difficult to give credit to another whilst going to perdition oneself. You yourself are blind, and will, by leading me along some thorny path which you have discovered, drown me in a dark well. It is the height of folly to expect that in this state of things I shall speak of your extensive experience. I admit that you have seen and heard much more than I have. But who says that all which you have seen and heard are unerring, incontrovertible, and eternally pure ? May be one day, in going to a river, its water seemed to you very pure and very cool. But who told you that, if relying on your word, I go into the river to bathe, I shall not be caught by a crocodile ? What is the evidence that, even if the water be pure, there is no fear of danger ? My going into the water may be the result of your extensive experience, but who will be responsible for my life? Secondly, this extensive experience appears to be to a large extent worthless. In the first place, it is the experience of a blind man. Next, it is difficult to ascertain the length of the period of which

[1] Spiritual teacher.

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experience has been had. Of all the experience which man has acquired during the four ages — namely, Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara, and Kali — we know only Āryāvarta,[1] Bhāratavarṣa,[2] or at the most, Jambudvīpa,[3] and perhaps the salt sea beyond. This is the furthest limit of experience. Now I ask, Who is it that has made mention in the Śāstra of seven seas — to wit, the seas of salt, sugar-cane juice, wine, clarified butter, curd, milk, and sweet water ? You will say that whoever may have done so has made a mistake. It matters not. But whence came the names of the seven seas ? You and I have not crossed the uncrossable sea, and reached the region of those seas. Whence could this country have got the names of the seven seas lying one after the other beyond the salt sea, which it is so difficult to traverse, and upon view only of the farthest quarter of which expert foreign navigators retrace their steps ? You may say: "I do not believe in your salt sea"; but you know by what language you will be addressed should such ingratitude on your part to that which supports your body with its salt become known. Lay aside your far-fetched interpretation, your philosophical reasoning, your scientific argumentativeness. I do not want to hear of them where a matter of direct vision is concerned. I will not admit the validity of any other evidence. I will not bow my head before anything except the Śāstra. May I be reminded of the lives of Samarasimha, Pratāpasimha, and Śivāji,[4] before I turn my thoughts to the words of those who, though possessed of the sense of sight, proceed to disprove the existence of things seen, and of truths established by Śāstra, and to give far-fetched interpretation of them. Alas! the lion-hearted heroes, pillars of Sanātana dharma! where are you to-day in this dismal time ? That resplendent lustre of yours hallowed by Sādhana is mingled with the Mantra Śāstra itself. Do ye to-day shed that lustre in every letter, in every accent? Let the Śāstra of Bhārata be again resplendent with the fire of the austerities[5] of Bhārata's sons.

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[1] Country of the Āryas.

[2] India, as described in chap. iii of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa.

[3] The continent of that name (see *Ibid.*, chap. ii).

[4] Rajput and Mahrātta heroes.

[5] Tapas.

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Next, the earth is composed of seven islands, each of which is divided into nine continents.[1] The nature of the surface of each continent, its extent, heights and depths, its inhabitants, their religion, practices, and longevity, the various Devatās who exercise particular power in each particular place, the different Devatās who are worshipped in different places, and lastly, the special accounts given of the seven Svargas[2] and seven Pātālas,[3] and so forth: these are all matters which I have not at all mentioned. Say, are all these things dreams or illusion,[4] or mere imagination? It matters not if you explain them away as mere imagination, but save your own head. If you call it all imagination, then, as the salt sea is imagination, as Bhāratavarṣa is imagination, so you and I too are imagination. We would advise you, instead of calling so many things imagination, to consider yourself alone as imaginary, in which case all trouble will be at an end. Not to speak of you and I, who are but the meanest of insects, even those whose acute and overpowering intellect penetrated into Brahmaloka[5] have, when dealing themselves with things which are beyond the senses, trampled on all kinds of evidence, and loudly declared to the world "Śāstrayonitvāt."[6] In that deeply dark place where all kinds of evidence fail, Śāstra alone is the glowing light. We know not how powerful must be the evil Karma[7] acquired from birth to birth of him who suspects or believes the Śāstra to be of human authorship. It is said:[8] "Thieve not, lie not, believe in and love the Creator, and you will attain eternal peace." A Dharma Śāstra, the foundations of which are based on a few such settled maxims as these may be the fruit of extensive experience. To be induced by such a form of faith to doubt or disbelieve the Sanātana Dharma and Sanatana Śāstra,[9] visible manifestation of Brahman

[1] Varṣa. [2] Upper worlds. [3] Under worlds. [4] Māyā or Moha.

[5] The highest of the seven upper worlds.

[6] "On account of its having Śāstra as its source," the third aphorism of the First Part, chap. i, in the Vedānta Sūtra.

[7] Prārabdha, or that Karma which has begun and is already bearing fruit (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*, "Karma").

[8] By "reformed" Hinduism.

[9] The eternal and immutable scripture and code of duty of the Hindus.

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himself, is the greatest degradation possible. It may be that in the case of that Śāstra which has as its main object the maintenance without conflict of a balance between the four actions of eating, sleeping, fearing, and sexual intercourse, its responsibility may cease with the provision of a few such maxims as "Thieve not, lie not, etc." It is, however, the greatest impudence for us to discuss the truth or otherwise of that Śāstra the object of which is to declare the principles relating to the molecules and atoms of the endless crores of Brahmāṇḍas, each consisting of fourteen worlds. These principles we shall state, so far as it lies in our power, in our discourse on worship.[1] Man is imperfect, and whatever he does is imperfect. The imperfect can never attain the goal, and that which has not reached the goal is ignorant of the full truth about the Brahman. Who dare proceed along an unseen path in reliance upon the word of such an ignorant guide ? Instead of relying upon their own words, Devas and Ṛṣis have therefore admitted the evidence of Śāstra, composed of authoritative sayings, to be alone the sole authority.

Responsibility for the education of children always rests with the parents. How can a senseless child be saved unless warned by parents, who point out to it which is the path of life, and which is the path of death? It is under this responsibility that, after the declaration of the truth, Bhagavān Himself has, descending on earth in the form of Śāstra, said: "Both Turīya[2] and Śabda Brahman[3] are my eternal bodies." Though invisible to human eyes, the Supreme Creatrix,[4] taking the world which She maintains upon Her lap has, as it were, with the finger, pointed out, and declared: "Do not, through misunderstanding,

[1] Pūjā.

[2] The fourth state of consciousness above dreamless slumber (suṣupti), the sleep of dreams (svapna), and the awakening (jāgrat). According to the Upaniṣads, there are the three last states; three functions—*viz.*, creation, preservation, destruction; and the three individual Jīva (Viśva, Taijasa, Prajñā), the collective Jīva (Vaiśvānara, Hiraṇyagarbha, Sūtrātman), and the Paramātman. The fourth state above these is the Turīya. Śaiva doctrine speaks of a nameless fifth beyond Turīya, and two functions, *viz.*, Turodhana, the function of Īśvara, and Anugraha, the function of Sadāśiva.

[3] The manifested Brahman with attributes—the sound or word as distinguished from the attributeless, unmanifested absolute—the Parabrahman.

[4] Parameśvarī—the Devī.

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fall away from truth, and Dharma, and the Veda. Do not stray from the path of right practice."[1] Following upon the echo of that solemn sound, millions of sacrificial pits[2] have been lighted on mountains, riverbanks, in fields, forests, hermitages, temples, sacrificial chambers of monarchs, and householders, and in the abodes of celibate ascetics. The very tops of the palaces in Heaven[3] have been reddened with the light of the sacrificial fires on earth. None can say how many millions of Āryan great men[4] have done sacrifices in religious observances[5] extending over twelve, a hundred, and a thousand years, and have with bodies cleansed of sin by their austerities,[6] entered through its open portals the Brahmaloka.[7]

Introduction of Tantra

The curtain of the drama of time gradually and inexorably continued falling. Slowly evil days of unrighteousness,[8] murky with Māyā, continued to cast a gloom of impure practices[9] over the world of Dharma. Unknowingly, men steeped in that darkness began to enter wrong paths. Disease, sorrow, grief, and anguish sorely oppressed the life of the world.

A diseased child brings death on itself by eating, under the influence of delirium, unwholesome food. Although the child does not understand, the Mother, who foresees the consequences, does. The thought of the child's inevitable harm naturally pains the heart of the mother, who is goodness incarnate. In accordance with this natural law, the loving heart of the good All-Mother Creatrix of the three worlds was moved, and the Mother, deluded by Her own play, with a grieving heart, questioned Vaidyanātha,[10] saying: "Deva of Devas, how shall the Jīva be saved ?"

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[1] Ācāra.

[2] The Kuṇḍa, in which the sacrificial fire is lighted.

[3] Svarga.

[4] Mahāpuruṣa.

[5] Vrata.

[6] Tapas.

[7] The highest, or the three highest, of the fourteen worlds.

[8] Adharma.

[9] Anācāra.

[10] Śiva, as chief physician of all human ills.

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In the Kulārṇava Tantra we read:

"Devī said: 'Bhagavan, Thou art the Deva of even Devas, Thou art Īśvara, the ordainer of the five duties, omniscient, easily approached by devotion, and merciful to thy supplicants. Though Parameśvara, Thou art the Īśvara[1] of Kulasādhakas and the only source of the nectar of mercy. Deva, in this worthless dark Samsāra, all Jīvas are oppressed with the gloom of sorrow. The countless multitude of Jīvas inhabiting all kinds of bodies constantly suffer the pains of both birth and death. There is no end of all this. None is happy, but all are oppressed with a deep sorrow. O chief of Devas and Lord, tell me how these may be delivered from the bonds of existence.

Here the Mother has given full expression to the purpose for which She has willingly become the Mother of the world. The heart of the Mother of the world was the first to weep at the sight of its miseries. Though Herself ever changeless, Her heart throbbed with the agitation caused by the immense rolling waves of emotion into which Her eternal mercy was now thrown. "Mother, this Brahmāṇḍa is Thy image and reflection. Thou seest Thine own face in the mirror of Māyā, and art intoxicated with Thine own love. The day upon which, at sight of the misery of the world, Thy mercy shadowed with gloom that everjoyful countenance of Thine, on that same day the countenances of Thy children were shadowed with the thought of the pain which comes of separation from Thy love. From that day the world which had been separated from its Mother knew the love of the Mother's heart. From that day Thy children in the universe have learnt to call Thee by various names: Durgā, when they have fallen amidst the insurmountable difficulties of the world; Tārā, when they behold the huge waves of the ocean of existence so difficult to traverse; and Kālī, when crushed by the torment of a terrible fate. Glory to the stream of mercy in the merciful Mother. Glory to the wave of pity in Her who is full of pity. Glory to the Mother's endless love. From that day the never-ceasing currents of Thy love flow through all the

[2] That is, though He is the supreme Lord and Guide of all, He is in a special sense the Lord and Guide of worshippers according to Kulācāra.

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veins, the marrow of the bones, and the heart of Jīva. And so to-day, O Mother, should even a vile, hellish sinner like myself forget in his danger all else, he cannot forget Thy name. Whenever the fearful form of danger appears, Someone opens, as it were, the door of the heart, and at that instant the courtyard of the universe resounds with the cry: 'Victory, Victory, Victory to Tārā!' I know not whether others hear the sound; but, Mother, since Thy own substance is the sounds Nāda and Bindu,[1] what sound, then, wilt Thou hear? Whether Thou hear it or not, I hear, O Mother, that as I sound 'Victory to Tārā,' another instantly arises as an echo: 'Fear not, have no fear." Who is that Other, O Mother? Glory to Thy eternal play. O Mother! Thou knowest and Father knows."

When the pain of disease becomes unbearable, I am instantly healed by saying: "O Mother!" But the disease is again made worse by the taking of a bad diet. The heart is again attacked by doubts, misgivings, and reasonings. Nowadays our ears are constantly tormented by the ravings of that Sannipātika delirium. Wherever we go we hear: "Why is there the Tantra when there is the Veda?" The patient does not understand that the delirium has got worse, and that his end is near. Upon this the chief of Physicians[2] is at a loss to discover what He should do. He then searches His entire store of remedies, and prescribes rasāyana.[3] At other times it is poison, but for delirium it is the elixir of life.[4] In a healthy body poison is the messenger of death, but in delirium it acts as a great mantra, renewing life. This is the reason why, O Sādhaka, a Sādhana of acute, powerful, and burning mantras, is prescribed for us in the Tantra. It is when all other medicines, all other Sādhanas, have failed that the necessity arises for the Tantra Śāstra, because in the storehouse of Śāstras there is no other Sādhana than that prescribed

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[1] From the Sakala Parameśvara came Śakti; from Śakti came Nāda, and from Nāda issued Bindu. The Devī Parameśvarī is container of them all (see Śaradātilaka, chap. i).

[2] Vaidyanātha or Śiva.

[3] A class of medicine in the Ayurvedic system.

[4] Literally, Amṛta, or nectar.

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in the Tantra. Śāstra has therefore said: "When the south wind blows strongly from the Malaya mountains, there is no longer need to wave the palmleaf fan." By Sādhana we nowadays understand something which has to be done upon one day in our life, like vaccination against small-pox.[1] Formerly we took the Bengal form of vaccination.[2] What does it matter that we now take the English form ?[3] Formerly we did both Sādhana and Bhajana[4] according to the Veda, Purāṇa and Tantra. What harm (you say) will follow if we now do them according to the Bible or even the Koran ? No other harm is done than this, that life is itself harmed. It may be enough for those to whom religion and duty are mere forced labour.[5] But in the case of those who wish to see Dharma as a thing directly visible, and who wish by its minute vision to realize all supersensual things, their resolve extends to death, their purpose to fruition,[6] their path to the Brahmaloka, and their destination is the Brahman Itself. O Jīvas of this earth! Conceive to what highest of abodes they, after penetrating through this cauldron-shaped Brahmāṇḍa must ascend, whose final aim is the lotus feet of the Mother of the world,[7] kissed by the head of Him who bears the crescent moon.[8]

This great Siddhi is the Jīva's perfect wealth to be gained by Sādhana, without which none can come by it; sought for as it is even by Him who is worshipped by all creatures. Sādhana is the name of that which ends in Siddhi. If I want that Siddhi I must do Sādhana, which is the work of a Sādhu.[9] So that if I have to do Sādhana, I must become a Sādhu, or if I do Sādhana, I shall, as a matter of course, become a Sādhu.

That Sādhana is of three kinds: physical, verbal, mental. Siddhi and Sādhana I must accomplish with my body, senses, and mind according to circumstances, country, time, and person.

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[1] The true nature of Sādhana is long and persistent effort and self-training until success (Siddhi) is achieved.

[2] Vaccination direct with small-pox virus.

[3] Vaccination with serum.

[4] Worship.

[5] Begār, done by compulsion and without reward.

[6] Siddhi.

[7] Jagadambā.

[8] Śiva called Candraśekhara.

[9] Pious person.

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Now it must be remembered that all my best wealth consists only of what I shall be able to acquire under the following conditions: It must be acquired in this country, crowded by Varṇa-samkaras,[1] Mlechchhas, Yavanas,[2] and persons who adhere to other religious beliefs; in the Kali age, with its bad practices, filthy habits, oppression, licence, and prostitution; with an impure body where lust, anger, greed, pride, delusion, and envy[3] contend as upon a battlefield; with restless senses, a doubting heart, and in a life which will last at the most a hundred years. All my commerce in the market of this world is with this capital only, and in its use I must both guard the capital and see to the profits. Now tell me who will perform religious ceremonies[4] and sacrifices[5] lasting twelve, a hundred, or a thousand years ? Where shall I get the Vaidik Hotars, Ṛtviks, Adhvaryus, and Ācāryas,[6] versed in mantra for such a sacrifice ? Of the thousands of Śākhās[7] of the Veda, but a few now remain as memorials; the rest are lost. Which mantra of which of the these Śākhās will to-day draw down which Deva to the seat of sacrifice ? From whence will the needed lakhs of heaps of Samidh[8] be to-day daily procured ? Will it ever again happen in that Bhāratavarṣa,[9] in the capital of which a thousand cows are now daily slaughtered, that the milk and ghee of milch cows will flow in streams like rivers ? Will the glowing fire be ever again gratified by the offering purified by mantra of mountainous heaps of the holy flesh of animals sacrificed ? Will Bhagavān Vaiśvānara,[10] with bearded face and matted hair effulgent with Brāhmik light, ever again rise from the sacrificial pit and, bursting through columns of fire playing in fearful tongues of flame, stand before the giver of the sacrifice,[11] and say: "Choose thy

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[1] People born of parents of different castes.
[2] Defiled person and foreigners of different kinds.
[3] The six sins—Kāma, Krodha, Lobha, Moha, Mada, Mātsarya.
[4] Vrata. [5] Yajña.
[6] Various classes of Vedic priests.
[7] Branches or school of Veda: the traditional text followed by a particular school.
[8] Wood used for the homa, sacrifice. [9] India.
[10] Agni, Lord of Fire, or the Bhagavān Himself in His aspect of fire.
[11] Yajamāna.

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blessing ?" Will the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha[1] ever again leave Vaikuṇṭha[2] at the prayer of Ṛṣis oppressed by Rākṣasas and Asuras[3] and descend to earth to guard the sacrifice from the harm which they fear ? Will a master of truth[4] like Śukadeva,[5] or a great Śakti like Draupadi,[6] be ever again born of the sacrificial fire ? Will Takṣaka, King of Nāgas,[7] trembling with fear because of a sacrifice, ever again have to seek the protection of Indra ? Will the Deva of a thousand eyes[8] ever again be about to fall with Takṣaka into a sacrificial pit, whirled down through space by the power of Brāhmaṇas and the wondrous potency of Mantras ? India has to-day lost her old strength and the vigour of her austerities.[9] Gone is that old faith, strength, and fortitude; gone is that courage. In what an unlucky moment was the fatal snake sacrifice[10] commenced! Then worshipped Fire became displeased with India, because of the deprivation of his worship. Then the mantra power of the Brāhmaṇa became offended at being prevented from consuming the King of the Devas[11] with Takṣaka. That displeasure and that offence has been in operation ever since. The old day has never returned. The curtain of the sacrificial world has finally dropped. It has not been raised again. How contaminating must be the effect of the Kali age, that, despite the presence in their full strength of Devatās, Mantras, Brāhmaṇas, and the materials for sacrifice, the latter was never completed. Who can unravel the mystery of the play of Yajñeśvarī ?[12]

For this reason I was saying: "O Jīva, born in the Kali age, how dare either you or I proceed there where Mahārājas Parīkṣit and Janamejaya failed ?" And even if we were to advance, would that make everyone happy? Yajña[13] is the Sādhana of only those who desire enjoyment, wealth, and heaven.[14] Are those who, being supplicants for the ambrosial feet of the spouse[15]

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1 Viṣṇu. 2 The heaven of Viṣṇu
3 Demonic beings. 4 Tattvajña. 5 Son of Vyāsa.
6 Wife of the Pāṇḍus. 7 Serpent divinities of the nether world.
8 Indra. 9 Tapas.
10 Sarpasatra, performed by King Janamejaya for the purpose of destroying all snakes, a snake having killed his father, Parīkṣit.
11 Indra. 12 The Devī as Lord of sacrifice (Yajña).
13 Sacrifice. 14 Svarga. 15 That is, of the Goddess, or Devī.

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of Śaṅkara,[1] set no value upon the abode of the Suras,[2] Indra, or Brahma[3]— are they to be tempted by Yajña ? What is to be done for such as these ? With what Sādhana will you gratify them ? You will say by purity of mind and body,[4] living in the Guru's house, listening,[5] thinking,[6] constant meditation,[7] contemplation,[8] concentration[9] and ecstasy.[10] These means exist in the Vaidik path for the acquisition of the truth. True; they exist as jewels exist in the sea. But what is that to you or me ? Who can be such a sacrificing monarch as Rāvaṇa that Varuṇadeva[11] should collect the jewels and present them to him ? Who is such an Emperor in the domain of austerity like Vaśiṣṭha, Viśvāmitra, Jābāli, Janaka, or Jaimini, that Bhagavān will churn the ocean of the Veda, and place all the jewels of the knowledge of truth in his hand ? Who can acquire a heavenly[12] body with the effulgence of Brahman,[13] like that of Naciketa, so as to enable him to go to the house of Yama,[14] and there from Yama himself receive instructions in the knowledge of the Brahman ? No more is to be found that Āryan life in which every event from the conception in the womb to the cremation of the body was accompanied by Vaidik mantra. It is no exaggeration to say that a heavenly body, the passions of which have been controlled, and which is thus made a suitable vehicle for the development of the knowledge of Brahman according to Vaidik rules, is nowadays impossible of achievement. Need it be said that no longer does anyone lie with lawful wife but once only after her monthly period,[15] kindling the sacrificial fire,[16] with a

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[1] Śiva, her husband.
[2] Devas. [3] Lord of the Celestials and the creative Brahmā.
[4] Brahmacarya. [5] Śravaṇa. [6] Manana.
[7] Nididhyāsana. [8] Dhyāna.
[9] Dhāraṇā. [10] Samādhi.
[11] Lord of the waters. [12] Divya.
[13] Brahmatejas. [14] Lord of death.

[15] According to the ancient Vaidik rule, sexual union must take place once a month, from the fourth or fifth to the fifteenth day after the menses (the conceptual period), and then only, without breach of that continence which governs the married state. The follower of this Vaidik rule is described as Paśu in the Nitya Tantra (Ṛtukālam vināḍeviramaṇam paribarjayet).

[16] The union of man and wife is a veritable sacrificial rite, a homa, wherein she is both hearth (Kuṇḍ) and flame. See the great thirteenth Mantra of the Homaprakaraṇa in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad.

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heart set steadily on the Parabrahman,[1] in the desire to get a son who will himself be full of the divine spirit. The ancient Brāhmaṇik fire[2] has sunk to ashes through eating the bread of servitude to foreigners[3] for hundreds of generations. No longer are our blood and seed pure and vigorous with the strength of austerity[4] and mantra. No longer do parents observe continence.[5] And so I was saying, long past is that day when the summit of the edifice of the Vaidik Brahma-knowledge could be made to rest upon the foundations of an unswerving purity.[6] Men no longer meditate on the Parabrahman with closed eyes, restraining the senses of perception and action, merging the mind in Prakṛti.[7] Amongst those who nowadays shut their eyes[8] and make a pretence of such meditation you will discern a movement in their shuttings and blinkings even in the darkness. All this is but a show of self-restraint. Bhagavān, speaking even of those who have really controlled their senses, but who have not through habit been able to dispel the mass of impressions which these have made upon their minds, has said in the Gītā: "The fool who, after controlling his senses of action, inwardly thinks of the objects of those senses, is called a hypocrite."

Is it not a vain presumption on our part to hope to be able to successfully travel along a path in which the discipline is so strict and the trial is of so searching a character ? Śri Kṛṣṇa, who was Bhagavān in person, failed to impress the truth on Arjuna, though he pointed it out to him, as it were, with a finger in the Yuga-Sandhyā,[8] at the close of the Dvāpara age and the commencement of the Kali age. He failed (Arjuna being a Kṣatriya[9]), to make him hold fast in his heart the knowledge of the truth[10] which is the possession of Brāhmaṇas. We are

[1] The Supreme. Similarly the Tantra (Yogini, chap. vi) says that union should be performed with a divine feeling and disposition (Maithunam pracareddhīmān devatābhāvaceṣṭitam), accompanied by the mantras given in the Tantrasāra. [2] Brahmatejas. [3] Yavanas. [4] Tapas.

[5] See *post*. It is a mistake to suppose that brahmacarya (continence) is limited to one of the āśramas only. It governs all, including the married state (see Yogiyajñavalkya, chap. i). [6] Brahmacarya.

[7] The Source whence the senses (indriyas), mind (manas), and all the phenomenal being, derives.

[8] That is, the period of transition from one Yuga to another, reckoned at a thousand years. [9] Warrior caste. [10] Tattva.

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surely, therefore, not awake but dreaming if we hope to acquire knowledge of truth by reading the Yogavāśiṣṭha, Rāmāyaṇa, and the Gītā while sunk in the gloom and under the full sway of the Kali age. We, on the contrary, know that many a spiritually disposed man, who, under the influence of such a day-dream, has attempted to become a Yogī along the Vaidik path, has ended in becomimg neither a believer nor an unbeliever, but a queer being, half-man, half-lion. By constant meditation upon a misty nothing,[1] his mind and heart become such a vacuity that there is neither faith, reverence, devotion, nor love in them, but merely a bewilderment with the inward lament: "Alas, I am lost !" In many places we have found such persons coming secretly to ask: "What means are there left for us ?" But their only difficulty is this: They want to know whether it is not possible for them to become Tāntrik or Paurāṇik worshippers in secret, whilst keeping up the show of the possession of Brahma-knowledge and without having publicly to wear the sacred crown lock,[2] or thread,[3] or to paint their bodies with the sacred marks.[4] Is it not deplorable that a man should be in this condition, repenting at last in this fashion at the close of his life, after having gone through all its useless troubles ?

It was with the knowledge that man might have to die such an unhallowed death even after the acquisition of the precious human body, which is, as it were, a thornless step to the door of Brahman, that She who dwells in the heart prescribed the remedy millions of years ago. But what can we do ? As I have said, a diet which is daily bad aggravates the disease.

The musical Sādhaka[5] has therefore said:

"It is the fault of none, O Mother Śyāmā.
It is I myself who dig and thus sink in the water."

And is that death an easy one ? The suffering of that repentance is more unbearable than even the torture of a hundred

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[1] Ākāśa: literally, ether, space.

[2] The Śikha, or long strand of hair worn at the back of the top of the head by orthodox Hindus from after the date of the Cūḍakaraṇa ceremony.

[3] Worn by the twice-born classes among the Hindus.

[4] Tilaka, or sectarian marks, and Nāma, or names of the Deities.

[5] Rāmaprasāda.

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rods at the hands of Yama. The thought of the remembrance of such a horrible death melts the hardest heart, and flooding tears wet the livid visage of the dying man. Then, with unrestrainable force, a fountain of tears bursts forth from the innermost recesses of the heart.

"What shall I do, O Mother ? Day by day the malady grows stronger. I am in grave danger through the disorder of Pitta as Sattva, Vāyu as Rajas, and Kapha[1] as Tamas. This time the delirium is that of Sānnipāta.[2] O Mother, it is my destruction,[3] and thus I weep incessantly ! "

At the close of such a life, wanting in trust and full of lament, both inward and outward restraint[4] are impracticable. The ecstatic trance[5] is impossible. The dawning of the truth that all is Brahman[6] is a far-off thing. In consequence, a journey along that difficult path, with a body decrepit such as mine, is hardly to be thought of. To take to the Vaidik path and then, upon failure to acquire a knowledge of truth, to judge the Veda to be ineffectual, is as though one were to judge a tree to be without fruit after we had touched its roots only, when the tree gives its fruit to him alone who can reach its topmost branches. There is more chance of getting the fruit some day or other without even touching the tree if one has but faith in the existence of the fruit, and takes up one's abode in its shade.

It may seem a mystery hard to unravel that the mere sitting down at the foot of a tree which gives its fruit only to him who can reach its topmost branch, without even touching its root and in dependence on faith alone, will yet one day or other surely secure the fruit, yet, in fact, it is not such an impossibility as it appears to be when first stated.

It often happens that parents walk about in the gardens attached to the houses of rich landholders, enjoying the evening breeze, holding by their hands their son and daughter. It may also happen that on such an occasion a tree is discovered in the

[1] Bile as sattva the manifesting principle; wind as rajas, principle of activity; and phlegm as tamas, principle of inertia.
[2] A fever. [3] Sānnipāta—a play on the word.
[4] Śama and dama. [5] Samādhi.
[6] Literally, the tattva of advaita Brahman.

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garden to be laden with ripe fruit. The parents, desirous of seeing how the hearts of their children yearn for the fruit, speak to them, and pointing out the fruit, say: "See what nice fruit has ripened on the tree." Instantly turning their eyes to the fruit, the rich man's children, bred up in softness and indulgence, are unable to restrain themselves, and at once assail their parents with weeping and the cry: "Give, give, give!" Out of play the parents say: "Then climb up the tree and bring the fruit down." But the children know that they cannot do so, and the parents' fun only fires them with anger. They then throw themselves about on the ground weeping. The heart of the loving mother is melted, and she says to her husband: "Enough now, find out the means." Then father and mother take up the two children in their arms, and hold them up to the branches of the tree. Thus supported by their parents' arms, the boy and girl pluck the wished-for fruit with their own hands and dance with joy. And thus we see that it is not impossible for the children of the rich, brought up with indulgence, to make unreasonable demands and yet to have them satisfied.

Sādhaka, tell me what King and what Queen you consider to be the greatest in the world? Who is a King before the King of Kings of three worlds? And who is a Queen before the Queen of the greatest Yogī?[1] She whose feet are worshipped by Upendra and Surendra?[2] You and I are children of such parents. Wherein are we of no account? Wherein do we lack tender, affectionate, and indulgent treatment? On the day upon which Jīva sheds bitter tears for the fruit of liberation borne by the Tree of Veda in the garden of the world, on that very day the Mother of the world, seeing that her weak children were unable to climb that tree, addressed the Deva of Devas,[3] and affectionately said: "No longer play; but quickly find some means." And what other means could there be than that which they gave? The Father and Mother of the world ex-

[1] That is, Śiva, who, by His great austerities, is the Lord and exemplar of all ascetics.

[2] Names of Viṣṇu and Indra. Viṣṇu is the younger brother of Indra.

[3] Śiva.

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tended their two assuring arms of Āgama and Nigama,[1] and held up their sons and daughters, the men and women of the world. Supported by their parent's arms, they have plucked with their own hands the fruit of liberation precious even to Yogīs borne by the tree of Veda. Sādhakas have thus, without having had to climb the tree of Veda, easily attained, by means of the mantras of the Tantra Śāstra, Kaivalyasiddhi,[2] the fruit of Veda. We do not know whether so much kindness is shown at all times. But it must at least be shown at the time of enjoyment of the evening breeze.[3]

The sun is setting, and a deep, dark, fearful night approaches. At such time can the Mother leave Her children alone in the dense and gloomy forest ? Satya, Tretā, and Dvāpara ages, the three praharas[4] of the Mother's day, are passed, and the last prahara of the Kali age is about to pass. The sun of the life of Jīva in the Kali age cannot long remain above the horizon, and so he too is going to set. A dense, dark, deadly night is coming. Is it to be thought that the Mother who gladdens the heart of Mahākāla and dispels all fear arising from existence will leave Her children alone in such a terribly perilous evening ? When She enters her Cintāmaṇi house[5] surrounded by pārijāta[6] flowers, in the island of gems,[7] Her sons and daughters also, whose only support is the skirt of their mother's dress, will, with quick steps, follow their Mother into the eternal region. Our

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[1] The Āgama is here the Tantra when in the form in which the Devī is questioner and Śiva the teacher; and Nigama when the Devī assumes the latter rôle to instruct Her spouse.

[2] Final liberation (Mokṣa); Bhojarāja, commenting on the Yoga Sūtra (iv. 33), explains Kaivalya to be that state of energy in which modification is extinct, and it remains alone in its own nature.

[3] That is, at the close of the last of the ages.

[4] A prahara is three hours, day and night thus being of eight praharas duration.

[5] Cintāmaṇi is the jewel which yields all desires. Of this the house or city is built. Brahmāṇḍa Pr.: In the Gaurapāda Sūtra, 7, the house is explained as the place of origin of all those mantras which bestow all desired objects (cintita).

[6] A heavenly tree in the paradise of Indra.

[7] Maṇidvīpa, in the ocean of nectar, called by the Rudrayāmala "the lamp of the world."

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Mother is Rājarājeśvarī[1] and all-merciful, and thus we are so spoilt, proud, and prone to take offence. We cannot give up the habit of readily taking offence,[2] which we have acquired from our companionship with our mother. This habit is essential to the relationship between Mother and child, and so, as long as life exists, we cannot give it up. This habit is a part and parcel of our life, and at death we will make a present of it to Her feet. Reciting the life-renewing mantra, "We are of the Mother and the Mother is ours," we shall bid farewell to the Samsāra. This, by the Mother's grace, is the standard of perpetual victory here and hereafter for the Sādhaka, the Mother's child. The Sādhaka knows that this play, consisting of mantras of Her whose embodiment is yantra[3] and Tantra, is very beautiful, sweet and charming to the mind and heart.

MONISM[4]

VEDĀNTA AND ŚAṄKARĀCĀRYA

Here and there we find a number of monists[5] who firmly believe that the knowledge of Tattva or non-dualistic Siddhi, as promulgated by the adored great man Śaṅkarācārya, cannot be attained in any other way than that laid down by him, and that none but he can teach the principles of monism. Had these people been themselves proficient in such principles, we might have found ground to believe what they said.

But we regret that their statement is the only evidence of their knowledge. We are unable ourselves to make out by what evidence they have arrived at the conclusion that non-dualistic Siddhi[6] is not attainable by any other means than that prescribed by the Vedānta. It may be that they believe that there was never born another as proficient in its principles as Śaṅkarācārya, who was an incarnation of Śaṅkara[7] Himself. We too, admit

[1] Queen of Queens.

[2] The meaning is that a child takes more offence at that which is done by the mother he loves than at that which is done by a stranger, to whom he is indifferent.

[3] Tāntrik diagrams, used in worship. [4] Advaita. [5] Advaitists.

[6] That is, the realization of the unity of all things. [7] Śiva.

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this with bowed heads. But what is the proof that the attainment of monistic truth is impossible except through the Vedāntik philosophy, as taught by him ? You and I cannot be men like Śaṅkarācārya. But cannot he be like Him whose incarnation he is said to be, and for which he is honoured and worshipped ? Is that truth unknown to Śiva which was promulgated by His incarnation ? How can we believe that a spark can burn the whole world, and that yet there is no heat in fire? As a matter of fact, the principle of monism, which was taught by the Vedānta philosophy, has been brought into harmony with the principle of dualism in the Tantra Śāstra. It is hard to say how many hundreds of Yogīs and Ṛṣis, Sādhus and Sādhakas, have been slain or wounded in the fights over dualism and monism. Bhagavān, the Creator of all things, has in the Tantra Śāstra brought that fight to a close by harmonizing prakṛti and vikṛti.[1] But those who are by nature inclined to fighting ever consider peace to be a trouble, and this is why even to-day there are to be found many dualists in the community of the learned who are hostile to Tantra. But the idea of a quarrel between Jīva and Śiva at one and the same time shames us and makes one laugh.

Looking at the matter with the eye of a philosopher, it seems as if monism and dualism are as much asunder as the eastern and western seas. On the one side monism says that the Samsāra is a mirage, a wave of Māyā, an effect of illusion, just as the mistaking of a rope for a serpent, or of the nacre of an oyster shell for silver. Brahman, who is knowledge, eternal, pure, and without attribute, is beyond ignorance, attributes and the samsāra. He has no desire, activity, endeavour nor is subject to Karma. In short, only He exists, and nothing else. On the other hand, dualism says that He has desire, activity,

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[1] Vikṛti is, literally, "change," as of form—here effect. The meaning is that the Tantra harmonizes the origin of things with its effects—God and His world.

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endeavour, care, and is subject to Karma.[1] In short, all things which are said to exist, exist in Him. There is nothing which does not exist in Him. Both are Śāstras. The one is not, in authority, either superior or inferior to the other. Which will give way to which ? Both have Bhagavān for their witness and Judge. The settlement of this dispute is impossible by mere men. Therefore, to dispel the doubts of the three worlds, She who dwells in all hearts Herself assumed the rôle of questioner, and He who dwells in all hearts and is the beloved consort, of the all-good Devī answered Her questions, and Nārāyaṇa[2] Himself accepted the answer as the truth[3] — *Agata*, or issued from the mouth of Śiva; *Gata*, or entered into the mouth of the Daughter of the Mountain;[4] and *Abhimata*, or approved of by Vāsudeva.[5]

For these three reasons, and taking the initial letters of the three words, the Tantra Śāstra is called Āgama.[6] Where Pārvatī is the questioner and Maheśvara answers, there the Śāstra is called Āgama. Where, to heighten the sweetness of the play, Mahadeva is the questioner and Maheśvarī answers, there it is called Nigama. The Tantra Śāstra is called Nigama by taking the initial letters of the three words nigata, gata, and mata, in the verse in which it is said — *Nirgata*, or issued out of the mouth of the Daughter of the Mountain; *Gata*, or entered into the mouths of the five-mouthed Deva;[7] and *Sammata*, or

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[1] All manifestations of Deity are subject to both time and Karma. Thus it is said, Namastat karmabhyo vidhirapi na yebhyah prabhavati (Saluation to Karma, over which even the Creator Brahmā cannot prevail), and,

Ye samastā jagatsṛṣṭisthitisamharakāriṇāh
Te pi kāleṣu līyante kālohi balavattarah

(The Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer, in time become extinct; because time is the stronger).

[2] Viṣṇu.
[3] Tattva.
[4] Girija, or the Devī as Pārvati.
[5] Viṣṇu.
[6] The author here refers to the definition of Āgama—

"Agatangiśambhuvaktrevyah
Gatanca girījāmukhe
Matanca vāsudevena
Tasmāt āgama ucyate.

[7] Śiva.

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acquiesced in by Vāsudeva.[1] The Tantra Śāstra is divided into these two parts of Āgama and Nigama. Just as, however, there is in reality no difference between Bhagavān and Bhagavatī, the male and female speakers of Tantra, so there is none between Āgama and Nigama revealed by them. The sole purpose of both is to give liberation to the Jīva by a method through which monistic truth is reached through the world of duality.

Despite the essential truth of the monistic principle, its comprehension by all is an impossibility in this dualistic phenomenal Samsāra. For this reason it has not been generally accepted as the path to be followed, though it has been preached even to the farthest quarters of the earth by Śaṅkarācārya himself, and successive generations of thousands of disciples who have followed him. Amongst those who have travelled along the monistic path, scarcely one in a thousand has succeeded in reaching his destination safely, without trouble. When we speak of the nondualistic path shown by Śaṅkarācārya, many may think that that which is devoid of Tāntrik practice and is advocated solely by the Vedānta is that path. But we mean nothing of the kind, nor is it our purpose here to say anything as to whether that path is or is not accompanied by Tāntrik practice. This much only we now say — namely that the monistic path advocated by Śaṅkarācārya is one which is characterized by the force of an intense Vairāgya,[2] as is shown by the command: "Hastily get out of your home." It is doubtful whether one man in a hundred thousand has ever been able to attain Siddhi[3] along this path. We do not know whether there are at the present time any true monists, but whether there are any or not, there are still many who in the name of Śaṅkarācārya pretend to be such in the Daṇḍī's matha,[4] the

[1] The definition as ordinarily given is:

"Nirgato girijāvaktrāt
Gatasca girīśa śrutim
Matasca vāsudevasya
Nigama parikathyate.

[2] Dispassion or indifference to the things of the world; other-worldiness.

[3] Success; that is, here, the liberation which is the end of all spiritual striving; or success in the preliminary stages leading to it.

[4] Monastic establishment of Daṇḍīs, a sect of Sanyāsīs.

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Brahmacārī's āśrama,[1] and the Mohanta's ākharha.[2] It is not yet time to speak of these. There are men in the successive generations of Śaṅkarācārya's disciples who have earned, in the opinion of philosophers, a world-wide reputation as monistic Vedāntists, and are still worshipped as Gurus, owing to the uncommon power of argument which they displayed in demolishing the views of Nyāya philosophers,[3] atheists, and others. How much Siddhi such men (despite their being Gurus of the philosophic world) really attained, Sādhakas can only guess from the fact that they disproved other's views and established their own. It passes our understanding how he who has knowledge of nothing beyond Brahman can yet resolutely engage in militant discussion with Nyāya philosophers. A power of astute argument in philosophy, and monistic Siddhi attained by Sādhana, are not one and the same thing.[4] Non-dualistic Siddhi is a far cry for him who has still the principle of argument in him. Who will deny that a discussion with philosophers creates an amount of distracting dualistic propensities a thousand times greater than that created by contact with wife and children? Howęver that be, while we are bound to make our reverence to these philosophical Daṅḍīs on the ground of their power of discussion, we are disinclined to give them even a nod on the ground that they should be considered as having attained monistic Siddhi. Such being the case of the Gurus, it is needless to say what sort of Siddhi is attained by their disciples.

The power upon attainment of Siddhi in Vairāgya Sādhana [5] to make the knowledge of the Truth[6] one's pursuit is a very rare thing in this Saṃsāra.

It is, therefore, no exaggeration to say that the achievement of the comprehension of monistic truth in the face of the antagonism of a dualistic world is an impossibility. Non-dualists travelling the path of the Vedānta know that a person, in order

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[1] Abode of celibate ascetic.
[2] Monastic establishment, presided over by its chief or Mohant.
[3] One of the six systems of Hindu philosophy.
[4] One is talk about, and the other is realization of the Brahman.
[5] That is, upon having attained to the state of Dispassion.
[6] Tattva.

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to acquire a knowledge of truth, must first appear before a Guru devoted to Brahman and seek his help, and that it is only if the latter kindly gives him instructions that he can acquire non-dualistic knowledge. Where, however, according to monism, all are Brahman, the relation of teacher and student becomes an impossibility. "Non-duality is to be sought everywhere except with Guru." The relationship between Guru and disciple is a thing of dualism. Just as, in order to pursue the monistic path, I must first with submission travel along the path of dualism — since, without a Guru, the attainment of Siddhi is impossible — so the Tantra Śāstra points out to us that if we entertain any hope of being able to travel along the monistic path we must first pass through, and must not attempt to leap over, the dualistic world. Great and mighty heroes have maimed themselves by taking such a jump.

I know that I have to climb to the top of a high precipice, but to throw my arms in the air and try to fly to it is not the act of an intelligent man. Those who, in the pride of the strength of their arms, have attempted to do so have invariably ended in being thrown to earth with broken bones and joints. At length, with grieving hearts, they, too, have said: "Know, O Sādhu! that it is more difficult to control the mind than to drink up all the water of the ocean, to uproot Mount Sumeru[1] or to eat fire, were such possible."

It was to save the Sādhaka from this deplorable condition and from these lamentations that the Tantra Śāstra was at length introduced. The Tantra Śāstra does not, therefore, at the outset ignore this visible, palpable dualistic world. As, to ascend a precipice, one must advance slowly, stepping on the earth itself, so also, in order to realize monistic truth, one must progress slowly through the dualistic world. You will only make monistic Siddhi more distant and difficult to achieve if it be believed that the dualistic world is inimical to Sādhana.

The Tantra Śāstra, instead of calling the dualistic view of things inimical to Sādhana, embraced it as a friend. It took into its arms, as though they were its children, both dualism

[1] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

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and monism. Tāntrik Sādhakas are filled with joy at the sight of the loving sports of both. He alone realizes the sweetness of the play of both who has plunged into the non-dualistic Truth after having churned the dualistic world. Though resting and rocking upon the waves of Samsāra, he is not of it. Though living in and affected by the dangers and prosperities of the Samsāra, he, like the petals of a wind-rocked lotus, is ever detached from its joys and sorrows. Full as his heart is of the perfect joy, sorrow never casts its gloomy shadows upon him. Because of this, Sadānanda,[1] elated with joy for his devotees, has said in the Tantra: "In the world some desire non-dualistic, others dualistic knowledge, but those who have known My truth have passed beyond both dualism and non-dualism."

Had those who would do away with the dualistic world as unreal been really able to do so, then no harm would have been done. But on many occasions we see that, whether they have or have not this power, they unquestionably do away with themselves. Why do you, who consider it do be nothing, dread the dualistic world, which you think to blow away with your breath? Again, why take so much trouble to blow away that which is nothing ? On listening to the lamentation of non-dualists, one feels as if the dualistic Samsāra had been created merely to frighten them. For them there is no peace, love, freedom from disease, or joy in the Samsāra, but only the cry, "Alas, I am lost!" and the lamenting call to "Save, save!" It is as though, from dread of the dualistic world, monism had shrunk all its limbs, and was trying to find a place wherein to hide its head in the eternal Brahmāṇḍa. Where shall it go to save itself ? Wheresoever it goes, it finds a dualistic world. It is of the dualistic principle that the world-play of Brahmamayī is made. Who, living in the world, can understand monistic truth by ignoring the dualistic world ? What greater folly can there be than to expect that you and I can with a frown do away with the dualistic world, which even men like the royal Ṛṣi Janaka, Śukadeva,[2] Śaṅkarācārya,[3] and others could not ignore. Not to mention

[1] Śiva the ever joyous.
[2] The Ṛṣi, son of Vyāsa.
[3] The expounder of the Vedānta philosophy.

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others, even Parameśvara Himself, the Guru of all moving and motionless things, at whose feet Suras[1] and Asuras[2] pay homage, made pretence to be deluded by Māyā, and sought protection at the feet of Her whose Māyā it was.

In the Tārārahasya it is said:

"The Deva of Devas[3] in obeisance prostrated himself at the lotus feet of Jagadambā,[4] and said: 'Devī, I have been through 120,000 books, and I am yet unable to say what is Kalātattva.[5] O Sureśvarī,[6] do thou relate to me that Kalāyoga![7] O Devī, lover of devotees, O Mother Kālikā, be pleased with me!' Hearing these words of Maheśvara, the Saviour of the three worlds smiled and said: 'All men in the Brahmāṇḍa are Thy image,[8] and all women are My image. O Mahādeva, practise this yoga day by day!"

Let the Sādhaka here particularly take note. Here Maheśvarī Herself is the teacher, and Maheśvara the pupil. Mahādeva is Sādhaka; Mahādevī answers his questions. The men and women of the world are the objects of Sādhana. Though omniscient and Lord of all, Śiva himself is bent on practising this yoga of knowledge,[9] and She who dwells in all hearts warms to-day even a disciple such as Śiva, and says: "Mahādeva, practise this yoga day by day."[10] The crest-gem of the greatest Yogīs will practise Yoga and that by means of daily meditation. Though He is Himself the Creator of the world, He musst worship the world before the Truth of Śakti[11] can bloom in his heart. It is only when it has fully bloomed that the dualistic universe will disappear in the knowledge which draws no distinction between Śiva and Śakti. The disappearance of the Brahmāṇḍa will lead to the knowledge of the true substance of Brahmamayī. The Sādhaka will now understand how the truth as to the Brahman[12] may be reached through Its universe.

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[1] Devas. [2] Demoniac spirits. [3] Śiva.
[4] The Devī as Mother of the world. [5] Art of Sādhana.
[6] Mistress of Suras (*ante*). [7] Art of Yoga. [8] Svarūpa.
[9] That is, as Śiva and Śakti are the objects of Sādhana; so are men and women, who are their vibhūtis.
[10] Jñānayoga. [11] Śaktitattva.
[12] Brahmattattva.

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To this objection may be raised that there are not only men and women in the world, but rivers, seas, tanks, forests, groves, fields, mountains, earth, air, sky, sun, moon, planets, and stars. How will these be eliminated ? We reply that nothing will be eliminated, but everything will remain. When direct knowledge of the truth of Śakti is gained, the Sādhaka will perceive that the entire Samsāra is nothing but the wealth of the Śakti of Viśveśvarī.[1] The dualistic world will then no longer appear to be inimical to Sādhana. On the contrary, this Samsāra will then be recognized to be a most spacious and sacred field full of materials for Sādhana. We will fully discuss this matter in the Chapter on the worship of form (Sākāra Upāsana) and the play of Śakti (Śaktilīlā). Here we close, after giving a mere hint of the matter in connection with the subject of the necessity of Tantra.

Next, many people express an anxiety as to the possibility of attaining knowledge of this hidden Yoga during this polluted Kali age. This also is not the place for a full reply. This much only I here say, that just as rasāyana[2] is the proper treatment for a delirious patient, so also the delirious condition of a patient is that which is proper for the application of rasāyana. By the beneficial law of nature, delirium generates such force and strength in the patient's body that, when he drinks poison, he is able easily to counteract its life-destroying, and to absorb its life-restoring, properties. Similarly, the corrupt influence of the Kali age has generated such a strong poison in the body of Jīva that in the delirium which is born in the malady of existence[3] he overcomes the life-destroying property of that mighty cure, full of the fire of Yogīs and Bhairavīs,[4] the Tāntrik Mantra, and with the help of its life-renewing properties attains to the position of a conqueror of death. Consequently, the Kali age is as fit for the Tantra Śāstra as that Śāstra is for the Kali age.

Non-dualistic Siddhi in the attainment of knowledge of Śiva and Śakti existing in all men[5] and women[6] may be new to

[1] Mistress of the Universe.
[2] See *post.*
[3] Bhavaroga.
[4] Women yogīs (yoginī), adepts in the Tāntrik yoga.
[5] Puruṣa.
[6] Prakṛti.

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you and me, but in the domain of Sādhana it is the utterance, ever true and eternal, of Deva. In the Kulārṇava Tantra it is said:

"The substance of the world is Śiva and Śakti[1]— that is to say, Prakṛti and Puruṣa. Whether this truth exists or not, Kuladharma eternally exists. On account of this soverign privilege, Kuladharma is the greatest of all Dharmas. How can that which is greatest be common to everybody ? That is to say, since qualification for Sādhana in Kauladharma arises only after the achievement of Siddhi in other dharmas, how can it be said to be upon equality with them ? "

It is by virtue of this direct knowledge of the Brahman in the form of Śiva and Śakti that Tāntrik Sādhakas ever conquer the world. Strengthened by it, the Sādhaka does not deign even to cast a look at other Śāstras. To him to whom the realization of Śiva and Śakti throughout the world is a constant achievement, the world is but an insignificant thing. Even the Brahmāṇḍa itself cannot contain the love which the Father and Mother everywhere present in it, bear for him who has realized that Jīva is Śiva and Śiva is Jīva, whether in Suras,[2] Asuras,[3] or men, or moving or immovable things, insects, flies, water, land, space, or in the eternal millions of moving and non-moving things. It is in the intoxication of that love that the Sādhaka poet Rāmaprasāda has said:

The Mother is present in every house.
Need I break the news as one breaks an earthen pot on the floor ?

Jānakī goes with Rāma,
Notwithstanding younger brother Lakṣmaṇa is with him.
Bhairavīs are with Bhairavas, and boys with girls.
Rāmaprasāda says: 'What shall I say of mother,
Daughter, wife, sister, or other ? '
Think for yourself."[4]

Tantra Śāstra has discovered the hidden path by which one may learn the monistic truth through the dualistic world.

[1] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.* [2] Devas. [3] Demoniac spirits.
[4] These are all aspects under which the Mother exists in the world.

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It has immersed the world of Sādhakas in the current of the divine Bliss[1] by now changing duality into unity, and again from the latter evolving a dualistic play. It has proclaimed the wonderful glory of the beloved spouse of Paramaśiva in the love-embrace of Matter[2] and Spirit.[3] At the sight of all this, one feels as if duality and non-duality were two boys who, quarrelling with each other and maddened by anger, go weeping to their mother, and stand before her in the eager expectation to see whom she will caress and whom she will rebuke. But, on the contrary, the mother instantly puts forth her two arms and takes both upon her lap, when each melts with the love she bestows upon him. Then in their love for their mother, with hearts full of, and gazing upon, her, they both forget themselves in their joy, and fall asleep on their mother's lap, her mere presence having put an end to all their quarrels and disputes. Here the Sādhaka will receive particular help from the last song in the first part of Gītānjali[4] entitled, "The great subject of discussion between the Tantra and the Veda is the Mother."

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[1] Literally, current of the rasa of Brahmāṇḍa.

[2] Jaḍa. [3] Caitanya.

[4] A volume of poems by the Author.

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CHAPTER III

THE EPHEMERAL AND MODERN MONISM

We shall have to refer to many a picture painted by former accomplished Sādhakas. Here we reproduce two modern examples, joyous and sorrowful, of dualism and non-dualism. Although it is not a picture of pure non-dualism as, advocated by the Vedānta, yet we refer to it as having been drawn in that light. Sādhakas will pardon me for such a quotation, which, though out of place in the Tantra Tattva, is necessitated by the corrupt state of things produced by a revolution in dharma. A thinker, overpowered by a dread of the dualistic world, has said:

"Thy intoxication of pride is unceasing, and Thy desires are unending.
Thou knowest that thy body and mind pass away;
Still thou doeth as if thou knew it not.
The seasons, tithis,[1] and months will come as before,
But thou dost not once think whither thou wilt go.
So listen, I bid you. Abandon the guṇas of rajas and tamas.[2]
Think of Him who is stainless,
And thy dangers will then cease."

To this song the high-souled Tāntrik Sādhaka Digambara Bhaṭṭācārya has made the following reply:

"Om intoxicates the mind. Desire is eternal.
The body is true, the mind is true.
And so is the Sādhana of Śyāmā.[3]
Winter, summer, all six seasons,[4] come, stay and depart.

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[1] Lunar days. [2] The qualities of passion and darkness or sloth.

[3] The Black One—a title of the Devī as Kālī.

[4] There are six seasons—*viz.*, Grīṣma, corresponding with parts of March and April (Vaiśākha and Jyeṣṭha); Varṣā, May, June (Āśādha and Śrāvaṇa); Śarat, July, August (Bhādra and Āśvina); Hemanta, September and October (Kārtika and Agrahayaṇa); Śīta, November, December (Pauṣa and Māgha); Vasanta, January, February (Fālguṇa Caitra).

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The Sādhana of the Mother's son endures,
And so does the kindness of the Mother's heart;
So I say to you, listen. Cease saying: 'Untrue, untrue'!.
Seek the Devī, who is Herself truth.
Free then shall thou be of thoughts untrue."

The Sādhaka will here realize the difference between the two. The non-dualist says: "Thy body and mind pass away—thou knowest this — yet still doeth as if thou knew it not." But Digambara, despite his knowledge of the ephemeral nature of body and mind, says that, though they may be ephemeral in and as part of the Samsāra, yet "The body and mind and practice of the Sādhana of Śyāma are true." If the mind and body be untrue, how can I expect to reach the true and eternal Mother by doing Sādhana with these false materials ? And can you, too, think of "Him who is stainless" with your false mind ? The pursuit of the false Samsāra makes the work of the mind and body false. But the work of the same body and mind will turn out to be true if these undertake a search for Her whose substance is truth.[1] If the body and mind be false, why should your dread be true ? Next, the non-dualist, says: "Winter, summer, and the other seasons, the tithis, and twelve months, will come as before; but whither thou wilt go thou dost not once think."

These words, however, do not lie well in the mouth of a believer, as if there were no certainty as to where I shall go on leaving the world in which there are the tithis, and twelve months, and other seasons; as if all things changing and revolving in the world will remain, but I only shall not remain; as if this will be my final end.[2] This is much like what infidels say: "Can the body return after it has once been reduced to ashes ? "

However that may be, the believing Sādhaka has frowned upon this lament of the transitoriness of things, and with an unflinching heart has said: "Winter, summer, six in all, come, stay, and go. The Sādhana of the Mother's son endures, and so does the kindness of the Mother's heart." Nothing goes away anywhere for ever. Things remain at the place to which they belong. The only difference is that they go, and return as new

[1] Literally, the true tattva. [2] Ecstasy—here "end".

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things. As in the Samsāra all things go, and return in a new form, so the kindness of the Mother is ever with the Sādhaka Her son in birth after birth. Nothing is lost for ever.

The Sādhaka will here take note of the divine vision of the accomplished devotee. "Winter, summer, six in all, come, stay, and go, but the son's Sādhana and the Mother's kindnes alone endure." Everything is ephemeral in the world which you know to be ephemeral. Only the son's Sādhana and the Mother's kindness endure. To the eyes of the Sādhaka privileged to know that truth, the ephemeral world also appears as eternal. Again, the non-dualist says: "I say to you, listen. Abandon the guṇas of rajas and tamas. Think only of Him who is stainless, and your dangers will cease." That is, "These guṇas are merely inimical to Sādhana; so drive them away; do not tread a path infested by robbers. On the other hand, think of Him who is stainless, and your perils will be at an end." That is, He who is to be thought of is stainless. His beauty is of a pure and perfect whiteness. The guṇas of rajas and tamas are, as it were, stains. With such stains one cannot think of Him who is stainless.

Thus we must understand that the white Sattva guṇa is necessary in order to think of the white Brahman. Now, I ask, is not Māyā a bond, and is it not composed of Sattva as well as of Rajas and Tamas ? Some day you will have to throw off that Sattva guṇa also. Perhaps you will say that constant thought of the Stainless One will cause the Sattva guṇa to fall off of itself. To that I would ask, Is that thought of yours, which can drive away even the Sattva guṇa, so afraid of the other guṇas that it cannot appear in their presence ? Thinker, your thought is full of cares. That it is which makes you so thoughtful. It is because Rajas guṇa and Tamas guṇa ever maintain the false show of the Samsāra that have to be discarded, and the mind made to rest on the Stainless One.

It is at this point that the Sādhaka says: "Brother, if you are a hero,[1] with the keen sword of Sādhana in your hand, why should you be afraid of the robber ? It is only the frail coward

[1] Vīra.

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who fears him." In reliance upon the fear-dispelling name of Abhayā[1] you cry: "Victory to Jagadambā!" and advance to conflict face to face and by the grace of Vijayabhairavī,[2] victory will, without doubt, be yours. See, however, that you do not destroy anything in the dominion of Rājarājeśvarī. Put your foes under your feet, and then you will see that these very enemies will be charmed by your dauntless bearing, and become your obedient servants, and will be to you like sons, friends, and attendants. Then joy will overpower you at the sight of the eternal and the transitory playing with one another. Do not despise anything as untrue. Digambara the Sādhaka has therefore said: "So I say, listen. Give up repeating, 'Untrue, untrue!' Seek the Devī, who is truth Herself, and you will be free of untrue thoughts. Just so long as the truth[3] of Her whose substance is truth itself does not possess the mind, so long the world will appear to be fleeting. When, however, the rays of the beauty of the Mother who is Truth itself come to fill the heart, when the eyes are filled with the vision of the Mother, then the variegated picture of the world is merged in the Mother's Self."

In whatever direction I turn my eyes I see nothing, nothing but the Mother. In water, on land, and in space the Mother dances before the eyes of the Sādhaka, to whom the world thus appears true. When the world becomes full of the Mother, then all the guṇas cease to be enemies. Nothing is then a stain. It is no longer necessary to regard the world as stained, and to look upon another as stainless. When the Mother, painted with brilliant collyrium,[4] dispeller of the fears of Her devotee, seats Herself in his heart, then everything, be it stained or stainless, becomes but the ornament of Her lotus feet. When great waves of emotion rise in the ocean of the Sādhaka's love, then the three worlds sink in the surging billows of its waters. The lustre of the black[5] beauty of Her who charms the three worlds, falling

[1] The Devī as dispeller of fear. The true Tāntrik is essentially the fearless one.

[2] Devī of victory.

[3] Tattva.

[4] Añjana, put on the eyes to increase brilliancy, to cure redness, burning of the eyes, etc.

[5] Śyāmā, a name also of the Devī as Kālī.

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whereon, lays open the gate of Brahmāṇḍa. Maddened with joy, the Sādhaka also then opens the door of his heart, and sings:

"He who takes shelter at the feet of Śyāmā
Never goes to the house of Death.
Whose heart and soul revels to drink the nectar of Śyāmā's name,
Whose thought and meditation Śyāmā fully possesses,
For him, in life and death, Śyāmā is his death's destruction.
Opening wide the portals of heaven and earth,
Raising on high the standard in Śyāmā's name,
By his own strength he goes to the cremation-ground;
Yet, having attained Śivahood, he does not become a corpse.
How can he become a corpse whose Yoga has been done on hundreds of corpses?[1]
He who holds in the cage of his heart the Śyāmā bird[2]
Makes Śyāmā one with the Self,
And ever beholds the Self in Śyāmā.
In love and with joy Śyāmā, uniting with the Self, dances.
Oh, the hair of my Śyāmā is dishevelled!
In Her black hand She holds a black sword;
The dark moon adorns Her dark tresses;
On Her dark face a dark smile plays.
The dark rays of Her body darken the face of the three worlds.
The spirit (Ātma) is Śyāmā,
The body is Śyāmā,
The Samsār is Śyāmā,
Śyāmā is one's home.
Nothing exists but Śyāmā.
Delusion also is full of Śyāmā.
In the false vision, which is Śyāmā,
The only cure of this Śyāmā malady
Is a draught of the pure nectar of Śyāmā's name.
Oceans and rivers and all other waters

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[1] Referring to the Tāntrik Śavāsana, or posture in which the fearless Tāntrik performs his rite, seated on a corpse.

[2] An Indian bird of that name.

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Become one in the waters of dissolution;[1]
All these are but corpses at the feet of Śyāmā.
The memory of Śyāmā fills the Samsāra with Śyāmā.
When shall the form of Śyāmā meet my gaze
In the form of corpses and in the form of Śiva ?"[2]

The community of Sādhakas will consider whether he is non-dualist or duality itself, the mirror of whose heart reflects the scene:

"The spirit is Śyāmā;
The body is Śyāmā;
The Samsāra is Śyāmā.
Śyāmā is one's home, and ocean and rivers.
And all other waters become one in the water of dissolution."

Difference between and Similarity of Veda and Tantra

The world, of course, appears to be thus blissful in the eyes of every Sādhaka, be he Vaidik or Tāntrik, who by the grace of Ānandamayī has attained Siddhi. There is, however, this difference, that the Tāntrik Sādhaka does not — in this unlike the Vaidik Sādhaka — see a hell in the Samsāra. The hateful and hideous picture which the Vaidik Sādhaka has drawn of the Samsāra, full as it is of wife, sons, friends, attendants, and other relations, is enough to create a revulsion in the mind of even an ordinary man. But it is a matter for great wonder that Tāntrik Sādhakas have discovered the play of the waves of Brahma-Bliss in the very Samsāra, and have pointed out, as it were with the finger, that every process of cause and effect which obtains in the Samsāra is in a direct manner the stairway of Sādhana. It is a matter of still greater wonder that Tāntrik Sādhakas, like fish, move and yet remain unsoiled in the mud of worldly actions, the mere contact with which would send you or I to perdition.[3] That pure transparent heart of his is not soiled or stained by anything. Even in the midst of fierce waves he remains as free as the petals of a lotus in water. A Vaidik Sādhaka, also, on

[1] Pralaya.
[2] The above verses are from the Author's Gītānjali.
[3] Rasātala.

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attaining Siddhi, does not think of the Samsāra as being anything but Brahman. There is, however, this much difference, which we may illustrate as follows:

Let us imagine that there is in a forest an ancient royal palace, the inner rooms of which are adorned with untold treasures. I approach the building with a desire freely to see or to take them. But such a foul stench comes from all sides that it is difficult to stay there for even a minute. Unable to settle what to do, I look about in every quarter. I find that at my very side there is a flight of stairs. The lower wall bears elaborate ornaments, but the stench prevents me from standing there to closely examine it. In particular, I note that, though there is ornament, there is no sign of a door whereby to enter the house. I am therefore obliged slowly to ascend by the flight of stairs, and with good fortune find myself at the top of the building. I there find that the entrance door of the palace is wide ajar, as if to welcome visitors. Entering by that door, I descend by a staircase, and in every room discover proof of the incomparable wealth of the King of Kings illuminating it with the lustre of its beauty. Whilst gazing with astonishment I descend into the lowest room. I then see the leaves of a side door flung open at my very side, through which another visitor enters into the building. Astonished and curious, I say to Him: "Sir, I did not know that there was a door here. When I came I examined the wall for a long time but could only discover ornament, and not a door," The new-comer laughs, and says: "There was, of course, the door, but you could not find it." I again say: "But you found it. How was it that I did not ?" He says: "You came by the right path, but I by the left one," [1] upon which the following dialogue ensued:

I. What is the difference between the two paths, New-comer ?

N. The decorations of the right path merely beautify the wall, whilst in the left path there is, besides beauty, a device whereby the lines of a door are worked into it.

I. How came you to know of this device ?

N. By the instruction of the Guru.

[1] That is, that of the Veda and Tantra (*vide post*)

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I. But how came the Guru to know of it ?

N. By command of the Great Architect who built this edifice.

I. When you pushed, did the door at once open, or was a key required ?

N. A key was required.

I. Where did you get the key ?

N. Gurudeva gave it to me.

I. But how were you able to stand in that foul smell ?

N. The bad smell is on the right path only. The left path is ever pleasant, fragrant with the scent of full-blown flowers, and illumined by their beauty.

Upon this I am very much astronished, and ask:

I. As both are paths to the royal palace, why, then, this difference between the two ?

N. (*laughing*). The portion on the left is the inner apartment.[1] Seekers of justice and favour and payers of taxes alone pass along the right path. It is their evil conduct and contact which renders the path on the right so miserable. But should anyone amongst those who have more intimate acquaintance with the royal family desire at any time to see the Queen of Queens (Rājarājeśvari), he goes along the path on the left.

I. What intimate connection, then, have you with the royal family ?

N. The Queen our Mother is my dharma-mother.[2]

I. In our country the relationship between a dharma-mother and a dharma-son is a very distant one. How, then, do you call it intimate ?

N. I have said She is my dharma-mother.

I. But what of that ?

N. You have said that in your country a dharma relationship is a very distant one, but in this our royal palace the relationship is very intimate, so I say She is no mother according to your dharma, but my dharma-mother.

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[1] Antahpura, occupied by the ladies, who in all Hindu households live in the zenana, apart from the men.

[2] Persons not connected by blood, but who entertain tender feelings for each other, establish such relationship by making Dharma their witness.

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I am abashed, and, taking him with me, leave the house. Standing by the sides of the door, I mark with his help the places of juncture. I see that the lines meet in such a fashion that one cannot avoid giving innumerable thanks to the artist, and showering a thousand curses on the blindness of one's own eyes. The edges of the door leaves are so neatly formed that it is not possible to discover them without knowledge of the secret sign. Looking with ordinary eyes, one sees nothing but decorations on the wall. Moreover, one is likely to receive a sudden fright at the sight of the snakelike markings to be found at every joint. However that may be, I am happy to see and hear. But I ask myself why, inspite of the existence of this path, I took the needless trouble to traverse one which was so circuitous.

Sādhaka, the "I" of this dialogue, is a Vaidik, and the newcomer a Tāntrik Sādhaka. The building is our gross [1] and subtle body.[2] The foul small which surrounds it is egoism, attachment, delusion, affection, hatred, shame, anger, fear, slander, and the like. The flight of stairs is the succession of Sādhanas. The open door at the top of the edifice is knowledge of Tattva.[3] The store of jewels therein is Siddhi or Brahmavibhūti.[4] The paths to the left and right are the Tantra and Veda respectively. The key is the Tāntrik Mantra given by the Guru. The decorations of the wall are the mechanism of the human body. The door leaves in the wall are the Mūlādhāra,[5] and the snake-like markings are Kulakuṇḍalinī Herself.[6] What else remains to be understood cannot be revealed. This much alone we can disclose. The rest, the Sādhaka will understand of himself. The Vaidik Sādhaka does not enter the house,[7] or even wait a minute on the ground-floor, for fear of the foul smell. He has no knowledge of the Ṣaṭcakra.[8] In deep disgust he goes up, and there attains

[1] Sthūla, or material body of food.
[2] Sūkṣma, the subtle body.
[3] The Brahman. [4] Power, wealth, and manifestation of Brahman.
[5] The lowest of the six cakras (Ṣaṭcakra), or centres in the body, situate in the perinaeum, between the genital organs and anus.
[6] The Devī who abides in this cakra, coiled round the Svayambhū Liṅga (see The Serpent Power).
[7] That is, on the ground-floor of the Samsāra, with its senses and passions.
[8] Doctrine of the six cakras or centres in the body, which is one of the fundamental principles of the Tāntrik Yoga.

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the knowledge of the unity of the Jīva[1] and the Brahman, which is the meaning of all such great sayings as "Thou art that."[2] But from the moment that knowledge of "That thou art" causes him to see the Brahmāṇḍa as a Brahmavibhūti,[3] he slowly acquires knowledge of the truth as to Jīva through knowledge of Brahman. And then, not to speak of the ground-floor,[4] even the despicable hell of foul smell which surrounds it appears to him as nothing but the Brahman. On acquiring this Siddhi, the world no longer has any terror for him. Then the Vaidik Sādhaka at last comes to see the Brahmavibhūti in the Samsāra.[5] On the other hand, the Tāntrik Sādhaka renounces the Samsāra whilst seeing the Brahmavibhūti in the Samsāra itself.[6] Although the latter is full of foul smells, his nostrils are pleased with a divine fragrance, nor has the Samsāra power to make its own foul smell perceptible or to quench this fragrance. For who can quench that sweet perfume which by a natural law proceeds from its navel,[7] and spreads over a yojana ?[8] And, similarly, when the Kulakuṇḍalinī Mantra, with its fragrance of musk, awakes in the cave of the Mūlādhāra at the base of the Sādhaka's navel, the universe becomes filled with fragrance, which intoxicates the world. The Sādhaka himself, overpowered by his own joy, scatters the lustre of that joy throughout the Samsāra. Such would also be the case were the Samsāra really a hell. But, in fact, and when viewed with discernment,[9] the Samsāra is neither a heaven nor a hell. It is only that which is its root ingredient.[10] Just as, by whatever name you or I may call a thing, whether cup, jar, bowl, or vessel, it remains in reality nothing but earth; just as, by whatever name

[1] The embodied spirit, which is one with Brahman.

[2] The Mahāvākya of the Upaniṣads (Tat Tvam Asi), which establishes this unity.

[3] That is, he sees the universe as a flowering of that tree which is God's power.

[4] The Samsāra, or transitory world.

[5] That is, the display of the Brahman in the Samsāra itself which is but Its aspect to us.

[6] He neither denounces the Samsāra nor becomes attached to it, recognizing it to be, what it is, the display of the Brahman to us.

[7] Nābhi, as in the case of the musk deer.

[8] A distance of eight to nine miles.

[9] Viveka.

[10] That is, it is only that which it really is—an aspect of the Brahman.

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you or I may call a thing, whether earring, bracelet, or necklace, it is in reality nothing but gold; just as water is water, whether you call it a river, lake, or sea; so the Brahmāṇḍa, by whatever name we may call it, husband or wife, father or son, friend or stranger, is but one or other aspect of the Brahmamayī.[1] You or I may not understand or admit it. But call upon all Dharmas,[2] all Dharmaśāstras,[3] and all the religious bodies on earth, and ask them. None will be able to deny the glaring truth told in Chaṇḍī:[4] "O Thou all-pervading Devī, Thou art the Śakti[5] in all things spiritual[6] or gross,[7] whatsoever or wheresoever they be. How is it possible to hymn Thy praise ?"

The whole world will surely and loudly admit the truth of this Śāstrik Tattva. What, then, will you hate as being a hell, or foul smelling ? In the Vaidik path the perception of this truth is the fruit of Sādhana; in the Tāntrik path it is both the root and the fruit. The Vaidik Sādhaka first tastes the sweetness of the fruit, and then waters the root; the Tāntrik Sādhaka, though he does not find sweetness in the root, yet waters it in the hope that he may enjoy the sweetness of the fruit. This is the reason why fruit ripens on the Tāntrik's tree long before blossoms appear upon the Vaidik's tree. It is impossible for a Vaidik to attain in a hundred years the Siddhi which a Tāntrik has in the palm of his hand in the course of one year. Tantra therefore says: "Without doubt, Jīva, during its sojourn in Samsāra, will quickly reach the abode of liberation if he but tread the great path of Kula Dharma.[8] For this reason the protection of the Kaula Dharma should be sought."

Many whilst admitting without doubt that the essential conclusion of all Śāstras is that She is all Śakti, and pervades all things, yet ask: "What is the use, so long as knowledge of this fact is not realized, of worshipping according to the Tantra Śāstra?" Such an objection inclines one to laughter. We in turn ask: "If

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[1] The Devī, or God.
[2] Codes of religion, duty, etc. [3] Scripture touching the same.
[4] The most sacred portion of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, reciting the actions and praises of the Devī.
[5] Power. [6] Sat. [7] Asat.
[8] Tāntrik Dharma of the Kaulas.

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the knowledge that 'She pervades all things' is realized from the very beginning, then what is the use of Sādhana at all?" It is, in fact, the very want of that knowledge which makes all prayer and Sādhana necessary. It is not want of knowledge which should make one desist from practising Sādhana. On the contrary, this circumstance should increase one's attachment to it.

To prescribe giving up food because the patient has a distate for it is not the advice of an intelligent man. On the contrary, an honest physician will advise that morsels of food be eaten every day, so that thereby the distate for it may be overcome. In Tantra Śāstra, also, the chief of Physicians[1] has given this very prescription. Different diets have been prescribed in different cases,[2] according to the nature of the disease.[3] But all the trouble and danger of which we hear nowadays in the community of Tāntriks are fundamentally due to mismanagement of those diets. The patient, through greed, eats bad food. Local medical men, for the sake of self-interest (and it may be, perhaps, without knowing the condition of the patient), will assent to his doing so. At last, when death arrives, a number of laymen will come and say that the fault is attributable to the system of medicine, and to nothing else. Similarly, through the disciple's greed and the Guru's fault, many an untimely death happens in the community of Sādhakas. Seeing that, a number of laymen belonging to the outside world are of opinion that the fault is that of the Tantra Śāstra, and of nothing else. Hearing this, many people show their intelligence by asking: "Is initiation in the Tāntrik mode indispensable ?" Valihari ![4] What a conclusion ! We say: Why take all this trouble, when medicine makes a distinction between good diet and bad diet imperative ? May not all treatment be dispensed with ? You and I find fault with Śiva and with the Śāstra, but the suffering patient plaintively says:

"Whom else shall I blame, O Mother,
But myself only and through fault of my own ?

[1] Vaidyanātha, a title of Śiva.

[2] Adhikāra, which is also a division of Hindu treatises on medicine.

[3] The reader should note the following passages; which give the Author's explanation of the corruptions which have taken place in practice.

[4] An exclamation at some absurdity. As we should say "astounding".

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I was mine, but said I was Thine,
And thus in a falsity I am caught."

Old men say that if both the diseased and the disease be on one side, not even the physician's father or grandfather can cure him. But as ill-fortune would have it, in our case the diseased, the disease, and the physician are all three on one side. That even in this state of things a few cures are taking place is due to the unfailing fitness of the Śāstra.

Consensus of other Scriptures as Regards the Authority of the Tantra

Who asks the wind to make the fire blaze ? As wind comes of itself to a smoking fire and reduces villages, towns, forests, and groves to ashes, so when the first signs of chaos in Dharma appear through the crooked influence of time, suspicious doubt and unbelief manifest themselves, and the heart of man, well furnished with the wealth of heaven, is burnt by the fire of irreligion, and reduced to ashes. Just as a fire first breaking out in a poor man's cottage gradually turns even the royal palace into a mass of charcoal, so if unbelief takes root in the mind of any member of a religious body it makes even the hearts of Pandits of the greatest intellect shake. An inflammable thing burns itself and at the same time any other thing which comes in contact with it. Similarly, an unbelieving man himself falls from Dharma, and also turns others who come into contact with him into unbelievers. For this reason all Śāstras, from the Veda and Tantra to the ordinary Nītiśāstra,[1] have counselled the companionship of pious men.[2] In the course of time society has long been denied the sight of such. Moreover, impious men have proudly usurped their seats, and, though themselves deceived, deceive society. The Ṛṣis were wont, sitting on the banks of a lake, to worship the Devas and the Pitṛs,[3] and to throw the offerings into the water. In the belief that the Ṛṣis are there, and attracted thereby, the fish in the waters swarm near the shore, but, fools that

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[1] Prescribing good conduct.
[2] Sādhus.
[3] The "Gods" and forefathers.

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they are, they do not know that the Ṛṣis have gone, and that their place is to-day occupied by fishermen who spread their nets. They who were wont to practise austerities and to distribute for the good of living creatures the offerings accepted by Devas have disappeared, and it is beyond the power of the ordinary man to penetrate the motive of those who have spread nets of selfishness from their place. Moreover, it is these people who lead the hosts of different sects and different Śāstras. They are very often heard to say that other Śāstras have no sympathy with the Tantra Śāstra, and that the latter is not a Śāstra, which all admit to be authoritative. By other Śāstras are meant principally the Vedas, Purāṇas, Samhitās,[1] and Jyotiṣa,[2] and, following them, the Dhanurveda,[3] Āyurveda,[4] Gandharva-veda,[5] and other Śāstras.

The severe blows of political and religious revolutions have left us but portions of all Śāstras. The rest are lost. Ṛk, Yajur, Sāma, Atharva, Dhanuh, and Gandharva Vedas are almost entirely lost. Of Tantras, Purāṇas, Jyotiṣa, and Āyurveda, portions only are extant. All present criticism must therefore be made to rest on ruined columns. Let us suppose that three subjects have been dealt with in the beginning, middle, and end of a Śāstra, and that only a portion of the first, middle, and final part of the Śāstra is extant. Every intelligent man will admit that it is a very wrong inference to draw if in such a case it were said that the Śāstra sought to establish only what was mentioned in that particular portion, and nothing else, It is, therefore, a sign of one-sidedness and shortsightedness to conclude that the Tantra is authoritative only if its authority is acknowledged in such fractional Śāstras as are now current, and not otherwise. Next, if these current Śāstras anywhere assert the Tantra to be un-authoritative, then the Tantra is authoritative; for Śāstra which disproves the Tantra must be subsequent to it. If the Tāntrik cult had not been in vogue previous to such Śāstra, how could it proceed to disprove it ?

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[1] Such as the Mānava and other Dharmaśāstras.
[2] Astrology.
[3] Veda of the art of warfare.
[4] Veda of the art of medicine.
[5] Veda of the art of music etc.

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According to Āryan principles, all Śāstras are without a beginning, so that none is anterior or posterior to another. Even now, in almost all of the extant Śāstras mention is made of all other Śāstras. Such a deeply secret tie binds them the one to the other that, should anyone slip from it, all are torn and scattered. It is, therefore, impossible for one Ārya Śāstra to disprove another. Such adverse criticisms as, despite this fact, we see nowadays paraded as "opinions of the Śāstra" on the Tantra Śāstra, are not the opinions of Ārya Śāstra at all, but the mere outcome of the activity of non-Āryan intellects. Upon the question whether there is in reality any opposition to the Tāntrik cult in the Ārya Śāstra, we shall lay before Sādhakas a few Śāstrik authorities, so that they may for themselves see whether other Śāstras approve or disapprove of the Tantra.

Upaniṣad says: "The Supreme Śiva,[1] the Author of all Śāstras and ordinances, prepared the eighteen Vidyas[2] of Śruti[3] and all the Darśanas,[4] manifesting Himself therein in play.[5] Being anxiously requested by Bhagavatī,[6] who is inseparable from His own Self, He revealed them from His five mouths in five āmnāyas[7] as the highest good.[8] The eighteen Vidyas are the four Vedas—Ṛk, Sāma, Atharva, and Yajur; the four sub-Vedas—Āyurveda, Gandharva Veda, Daṇḍa Nītī, and Dhanurveda;[9] six Vedāṇgas—*viz.*, Śikṣā, Kalpa, Vyākaraṇa, Nirukta, Chhandah, and Jyotiṣa;[10] and Purāṇa, Nyāya, Mīmāmsā, and Dharma Śāstra; and, lastly, the six Darśanas[11]—Vedānta, Yoga, Sāṇkhya, Mīmāmsā, Viśeṣa, and Nyāya."

We believe that no one is ignorant of the fact that a fundamental part of Tāntrik Sādhana is Ṣaṭcakrabheda.[12] The first

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1 Paramaśiva. 2 Branches of knowledge described *post.*
3 Revelation. 4 Systems of Philosophy.
5 That is, by incarnating Himself as the Ṛṣis, who were their revealers or authors.
6 The Devī. 7 Teachings handed down from Guru to Guru.
8 Paramārtha. 9 Medicine, art, code of punishments, warfare.
10 That is, pronunciation of words, or euphony, ritual, grammar, glossary, prosody, astronomy, and astrology.
11 Systems of Philosophy.
12 That is, the piercing of the six cakras or centres in the human body by rousing Kuṇḍalinī in the Mūlādhāra, and leading Her to and through each of them successively, by the passage of the Suṣumnā Nāḍi (see Arthur Avalon's The Serpent Power).

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aphorism[1] of the Ṣaṭcakrabheda comes from Upaniṣad itself. We are unable to quote the Vaidik Mantra in a book,[2] but for the purpose of illustration we shall refer only to its substance. It says: "One hundred and one nāḍis[3] emanate from the base of the heart. Of these, only one—Suṣumnā—passes out through the head.[4] If at death the life-giving Śakti passes upward along this nāḍi, the Jīva penetrates through the gate of Sūryaloka,[5] and attains liberation. All other nāḍis are the cause of the Jiva's return to Samsāra.[6] Suṣumnā alone leads to liberation."

The same is stated in the seventh Mantra of the Praśna Upaniṣad. In the Kālikā, Tārā, Nārāyaṇa, Śiva Upaniṣads, the Nṛsimhatāpanī, Gopālatāpanī, and other works, short but pregnant aphorisms deal with the appearances[7] of Devatā, Mantras, Dhyāna,[8] worship,[9] and other things related in the Tantra alone. This, we believe, is not unknown to any worshipper. In addition to this, the greater part of the processes dealt with in Tantra relative to killing, driving away, and so forth,[10] is contained in the Atharvaveda. Many Vaidik Mantras have also been prescribed in Tāntrik worship. Then who can say how many hundreds of Tāntrik upāsana tattvas[11] have disappeared with the loss of hundreds and thousands of Śākhās[12] of the Vedas ? Other examples are unnecessary.

In our discussion upon the principle of Mantra, Sādhakas will be given clear proof to show that event he Pranava,[13] the greatest treasure and very pith of the Veda, is not outside the scope of the Tāntrik Mantras. In the Nāradapancarātra[14] it

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[1] Sūtra. [2] This being forbidden.

[3] Generally translated "nerve" or "artery," but as used in the case of the Suṣumnā and other similar nāḍis, the word also denotes more subtle channels of energy than the nerves and arteries of the gross body.

[4] This nāḍi is centrally situated in the Merudaṇḍa, or spinal column, between Iḍā and Piṅgalā.

[5] Abode of the sun. [6] The world.

[7] Mūrti of a Devatā. [8] Contemplation. [9] Upāsana.

[10] This refers to the Tāntrik Ṣatkarma, or magical powers—Māraṇam (destruction); uchchātanam (driving away); vaśīkaraṇam (bringing under control, which would include hypnotism); stambhanam (arrest—*e.g.*, staying a storm, striking a man dumb); vidveṣaṇam (causing antagonism between persons); svastyāyanam (curative and helping power in disease, misfortune, and danger). [11] Forms of, or discourses concerning, worship.

[12] Branches of the Veda. [13] The Mantra Om. [14] Chap. iii.

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is said: "Meditating on the six cakras, Mūlādhāra, Svādiṣṭhāna, Maṇipūra, Anāhata, Viśuddha, and Ajñā,[1] he sees his own adored Devatā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in his heart, seated on the lotus of a thousand petals embraced by the Śakti Kuṇḍalinī smiling, beauteous, pure, having the lustre of a young cloud,[2] garmented in yellow silk. In the following Śloka[3] the great eight-lettered Mantra of Bhagavān Śri Kṛṣṇa is given:

"Lakṣmīrmāyā kāmabījam' ng'entam kṛṣṇapadam tathā
Vahnijāyāntamantranca mantrarājam manoharam."[4]

In the Varāha Purāṇa it is said: "Beloved, the remembrance, praise, sight, or even touch of a Caṇḍāla[5] who is devoted to Bhagavān[6] easily purifies the world. Lady! knowing this more than earthly power of devotion to Bhagavān, intelligent men should worship Janārdana[7] by the rites prescribed in the Veda of Āgama."[8]

In the Kālikā Purāṇa[9] it is said: "The Devī should be meditated upon as ten-handed, and worshipped according to Durgā Tantra." This is merely an indication of the line of worship. The entire Ḳālika Purāṇa follows the Tantra. All the bījas,[10] Mantras and Mūrtis of Bhagavān Maheśvara[11] which are given for the Śivakavaca[12] in the Brahmottara Khāṇḍa[13] of the Skanda Purāṇa are inspired by Tantra.

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1 These are the names of the six cakras situate in the perinaeum and in the regions of the genital organ, navel, heart, throat and between the eyebrows, respectively.

2 A cloud when first formed—black with a tinge of blue from the sky behind it.

3 From chap. iv of same work.

4 The author does not translate this verse, which, however, runs as follows: "The charming King of Mantras is Laksmī Māyā, Kāma bījas, together with the fourth case ending of Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇāya), followed by the wife of fire."

Vahnijāyā is Svāhā, the wife of the Lord of Fire. Nor does the author give the Mantra, which is: Śrīm, Hrīm, Klīm, Kṛṣṇāyā Svāhā. The first three words are Tāntrik bījas of Lakṣmī, Māyā, and Kāma, respectively.

5 One of the lowest, untouchable castes.

6 God.

7 Kṛṣṇa.

8 The Tantra.

9 Śāradīya Adhikāra.

10 Tāntrik "Seed" mantras, such as klīm, hrīm, śrīm, hūm, etc.

11 Śiva.

12 Amulet of Śiva, borne as an armour (Kavaca) against evil.

13 A portion of the Skanda Purāṇa.

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The Padma Purāṇa says.[1] "O Devī of beautiful thighs,[2] the religious arts of the uninitiated avail not. Such a one is begotten a beast after death. How can Jīva be beloved of Bhagavān without Vaiṣṇavī initiation, without the Gaurī's favour and without Vaiṣṇava Dharma ?"

In the Devī Bhāgavata we read: "In this manner in the Satya Yuga[3] Brāhmaṇas used to make constant japa[4] of the Gāyatri, Tārā, and Hrillekhā Mantras." Hrillekhā is a Mantra spoken of in the Tantra. Besides this, the whole of the Upāsanā Khāṇḍa[5] of the Devi Bhāgavata is ornamented with garlands of Tāntrik Mantras.

In the Mahābhārata[6] we have Bhagavān Maheśvara's words to Dakṣa on the subject of his sacrifice: "O doer of good deeds, I shall again grant you a blessing. Accept it, and hear the message of this blessing with joyous countenance and attentive mind. This auspicious Pāśupata Vrata[7] was of yore created by me. It is a vrata extracted by me with careful consideration from the Veda with its six aṅgas[8] and the Sāṇkhya and Yoga Śāstras. It is performed with severe and long austerities by Devas and Dānavas;[9] hitherto unknown; of universal application and everlasting effect. It may be accomplished in five years, is secret, never blamed by the wise (or it is blamed by fools), and is opposed to the Dharma based on caste distinctions.[10] It is above āśrama dharma[11] and is practised by the great, who are not afraid of death. High-favoured Dakṣa! Enjoy, without even performing the great vrata, the great fruits which it bears to

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[1] Uttarakhāṇḍa (last part).

[2] See Lalitā Sahasranāma; Kāmeśajñātasaubhāgya mardavoru dvāyanvitā.

[3] The first or golden age.

[4] Recitation of Mantra.

[5] The portion of the Devī Bhāgavata dealing with worship.

[6] Śānti Parva (see translation, Introduction, *ante*).

[7] Voluntary religious vow or rite.

[8] Parts (see *post*).

[9] Demoniac spirits.

[10] Varṇāśramadharma—relating both to caste and the āśrama, or stages of life: brahmacārī (student), gṛhastha (householder), vānaprastha (recluse), bhikṣu (religious mendicant). Historically, the Tantra appears to represent in some degree influences contrary to caste and Brāhmaṇical claims.

[11] Law and duty relating to the Āśrama (see *post*).

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those who duly perform it. Cease to grieve at the destruction of the sacrifice. Granting this blessing to Dakṣa Prajāpati, Bhagavān Mahādeva, of immense might, disappeared with his consort and followers." The community of Sādhakas will understand that this great Pāśupatavrata was according to the Tantra. Besides this, there are many places which closely follow the Tantra. It is needless to mention them all.

Next comes the Mahābhāgavata. It is unnecessary to say that this great Purāṇa follows the Tantra, seeing that it is eternally set on the thousand petals of the lotus, whereon Jagadambā is seated, and that it is that which Bhagavān Vedavyāsa[1] declared to be only another form of Tantra. It is needless to quote any single piece of evidence from the book, for the whole of it, from beginning to end, is evidence.

In the Yoga Śāstra, the philosophy of Patañjalī, it is said: "Siddhi is of five kinds—namely, acquired by birth, drugs, Mantra, austerity and ecstasy.[2] Some are in possession of Siddhi from birth, such as Kapila, Prahlāda, Śuka, and others. Some get it by taking drugs, such as the Ṛṣi Māṇḍavya. Some acquire it by constant japa of the Mantra, such as the successful Sādhakas. Others obtain it by dint of austerities, such as Viśvāmitra and others. Some attain to it by means of ecstasy,[3] and such are Yogīs."

All these five forms of Siddhi are the results of practice in Yoga in former births. In the present life they are simply revealed by the help of such causes as birth, drugs, Mantra, etc. That form of Siddhi which comes from constant repetition of Mantras cannot be acquired without the help of Tantra, the Mantraśāstra. Again, according to the Tantra, it is not the highest, but the second form of Siddhi.

As to the Āyurveda, every good physician knows (as is also not unknown to Sādhakas that all forms of worship directed in connection with the saying of Mantra[4] over medicines, pre-

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[1] Who arranged the Vedas, wrote Mahābhārata and the eighteen great Purāṇas.

[2] Janmaja, Oshadhija, Mantraja, Tapoja and Samādhija.

[3] Samādhi.

[4] Āmantranā.

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paration of metallic drugs of the ash of mercury, and other things, as described in the Āyurveda, follow processes prescribed in the Tantra and employ Tāntrik bījas, Mantras, etc.[1] We are unable to openly quote all those Bījas, Mantras, etc. Competent inquirers will obtain a mass of evidence by going through this Śāstra.

In Jyotiṣa it is said: "At inauspicious times, such as unclean months, the following acts should not be done: commencement of education, piercing of the ear-lobes, tonsure, investiture with the sacred thread, marriage, bathing for the first time at a place of pilgrimage, seeing the Anādi-devatā,[2] examination, enjoyment of ease, puraścaraṇa,[3] and initiation."[4] Had not the Tantra Śāstra been an ever-existent authority, how could puraścaraṇa and dīkṣa have been dealt with in it ?

Smṛti Agastya Samhitā says: "The Mantra, which Guru gives with satisfaction and a joyous countenance . . . performing these preliminaries and mentioning the time of solar eclipse, it has been said that the Mantra which a person receives from his Guru at that time becomes easily successful[5] for the Sādhaka."

In the Mahākapila Pañcarātra we find: "Instruction in Mantra given by Guru at the said Nakṣatra, Tithi, Karaṇa, Yoga, and Vāra,[6] becomes auspicious to a Sādhaka."

According to Piṅgalā, "a Mantra, once rightly accomplished, becomes propitious even if it is not practised and worshipped (afterwards)."

In the Mantramuktāvalī:[7] "Initiated persons should duly make japa of Mantras and worship Devatās, for no sin or uncleanliness touches the initiated who are self-controlled."

It has been said in the Nārada Samhitā: "Next, we shall provide for pūjā, as prescribed in Āgama,[8] concerning persons tainted with uncleanliness.

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[1] Indian medicine is greatly indebted to the Tāntriks.

[2] Śiva lingam.

[3] A rite in which mantras are repeated at prescribed manner of times (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[4] Dīkṣā. [5] Siddha.

[6] Star, lunar day, a division of the day (of which there are eleven), conjunction, week day.

[7] Adhikāra (chapter) on Aśauca (uncleanliness). [8] Tantra.

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Besides this, there is a mass of proof in Brahma Purāṇa, Śiva Purāṇa, Viṣṇu Purāṇa, Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, Agni Purāṇa, Āditya Purāṇa, Vāyu Purāṇa, Liṅga Purāṇa, Nandikeśvara Purāṇa, Bhaviṣya Purāṇa, Matsya Purāṇa, Kūrma Purāṇa, Garuḍa Purāṇa, Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa, Brahmavaivarta Purāṇa, Matsya Sūkta, Śiva Samhitā, Īśāna Samhitā, Śiva Dharma, Śiva Sūtra, and other Śāstras. Were we to quote the evidence of every book, it would not be possible to find room for them in this small volume. We are, therefore, obliged to refrain from doing so against our will.

Next, it is necessary to inquire in this connection whether there were ever any Sādhakas or Sādhikās[1] initiated in Tāntrik Mantras, and possessed of Siddhi therein, amongst those who were discoverers, controllers, and founders of Śāstras, or amongst those who were worshipped throughout the world as successive generations of gurus for their practices, study, Sādhana, and Siddhi in every Śāstra, or amongst those who descended on earth from the Devīloka and Devaloka,[2] for the establishment of Dharma, the preservation of the human race, and the promulgation of Śāstra. We shall make no reference to the community of Sādhakas coming after them. Those only we shall present here whose names the Śāstras have proclaimed.

The Kulacūḍāmaṇi says: "Manu, Candra, Kubera, Manmatha, Lopāmudrā, Maṇī, Nandi, Sakra, Skanda, Śiva, Krodhabhattāraka. Pañcamī, Durvāsā, Vyāsa, Śūrya, Vaśiṣṭa, Parāśara, Aurva, Vahni, Yama, Nirṛita, Varuṇa, Aniruddha, Bharadvāja, Dakṣiṇāmūrti, the Ganapā, the Kulapā, Lakṣmī, Gangā, Sarasvatī, Dhātrī, Śeṣa, Pramatta, Unmatta, Kulabhairava, Kṣetrapāla, Hanumān, Dakṣa, Garuḍa, Kāśyapa, Kutsa, Kunta, Jamadagni, Bhṛgu, Bṛhaspati, the Chief of the Yadus, Dattātreya, Yudhiṣṭira, Arjuna, Bhīmasena, Droṇācārya, Vṛṣākapi, Duryodhana, Kunti, Sītā, Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, Draupadī, Ūrvaśī, Tilottamā, Puṣpadanta, Mahābuddha, Vāla, Kāla, Mandāra, Kailāśa, Kṣīrasindhu, Udadhi, Himavān, Nārada—all these are Vīrasādhakas.[3] They have been spoken of as great

[1] Female Sādhaka. [2] Abode of Devī and Devas (heaven).
[3] That is, Sādhakas following vīrācāra.

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Vīras,[1] and by the grace of Mahāvidyā[2] they have attained Samādhi in their respective lines of action."

The Jñānārṇava[3] says: "The said Vidya[4] is worshipped by Manu"; and the Dakṣināmūrti Samhitā says: "The above-mentioned Mantra is worshipped by Sūrya," and "the said Vidyā is worshipped by Agastya," and as to another Mantra, "The said Vidyā is worshipped by Dūrvāsa."

In addition to all these, Dattātreya, Paraśurāma, Viśvāmitra, Rāmacandra, Balarāma, Śri Kṛṣṇa, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Mahākāla Himself, the imperturbable Nārada, Mātanga, and other Bhairavas, Sanatkumāra, Gautama, Kapila, Kātyāyana, and other Ṛṣis, were all initiated in the Mantras of Tantra, and attained Siddhi therein. From the special mention of these persons as initiates it does not follow that the rest were uninitiate. Śāstra has merely mentioned the names of those whom circumstance has made renowned in all the worlds, and of the names mentioned but one small sūtra has been quoted. In one word, it may be said that, amongst those whose names have been mentioned in the Ārya Śāstras, Smṛtis, and Samhitās, those who were uninitiated in the Mantras of the Tantra are very rare.

On hearing that even Mahākāla, imperturbable Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara, Rāmacandra, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Gangā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Sīta, Rukmiṇī, and others, were initiated in Tāntrik Mantras, let none think that their greatness was lowered thereby. Their store of greatness is not so small as yours or mine that it is liable to be dried up at every wind. The addition or subtraction of one or two waves makes very little difference in a greatness which is of endless extent, unfathomable, and solemn, like a vast ocean unruffled by any wind. How can their greatness be lowered unless they worship another ?[5] It is because we are talking that we are obliged to use the word "their". But from the spiritual point of view it should be "His". Sādhaka, know it for certain that, under the names of Kālī or Kṛṣṇa, Hari or

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[1] Here one of the Tāntrik divisions of worshippers. [2] The Devī.
[3] In the Mantra adhikāra (chapter). [4] Feminine Mantra.
[5] That is, they worship themselves.

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Hara,[1] it is Him whom we know—He who, moved by the sweetness of His own play, and with the desire to shed the joy of love and Brahma-bliss upon the hearts of His devotees, saves the universe in five[2] forms, though but one Brahman in reality. He is five in one and one in five, and, together with the universe, is one without a second. What other, then, is there whom He can worship ? If in any form, in the course of play or in any incarnation, He has worshipped, know that worship to be nothing but the tapasyā of Nara Nārāyaṇa[3] in the Badarikāśrama,[4] the pañcatapah of Jagadambā in the Himālaya,[5] the worship of Govardhana in Brindāvana,[6] the Kātyāyanī-Vrata,[7] the love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and worship of Kṛṣṇa-Kālī by Śrī Rādhikā, and the worship of Mahādeva by Śri Kṛṣṇa, after receiving initiation from Vedavyāsa. He has made obeisance to Himself, and that not in order to worship another, but in order to preach to the world the potency of Mantra, Tapas, and Dharma. Whenever it has become necessary to preach any Śakti to the religious world, He Himself has shown the path by acquiring Siddhi in the Sādhana of that Śakti, worship being but the means to the attainment of Siddhi. He has thus given instruction to all people. Bhagavān appears in the heart of Guru, and Himself gives His own Mantra to the disciple. In this His greatness does not suffer. How can the son learn to make obeisance to his parents unless the parents themselves show it to him ? The parents of the world have therefore, made obeisance to themselves, and so taught the world how to make obeisance to them. As His full Brahmahood is not affected by His appearance as a

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[1] Viṣṇu and Śiva.

[2] The pañcadevatā: Śiva, Viṣṇu, Śakti, Ganeśa, and Sūrya.

[3] Nara, an ancient ṛṣi, and Nārāyana is Viṣṇu. Both did tapas in the Badarikāśrama (Badarinath) in the Himālaya. Nara subsequently incarnated as Arjuna, and Nārāyaṇa as Śri Kṛṣṇa, at the end of Dvāpara Yuga.

[4] See last note.

[5] Gaurī performed the pañcatapah (five penances to secure Śiva as Her husband).

[6] Śrī Kṛṣṇa worshipped the mountain Govardhana.

[7] Vrata which Śrī Kṛṣṇa asked the Gopīs (herdswomen) to perform before the Rāsa festival.

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daughter of the Lord of Mountains as the fruit[1] of Mahādeva's austerities and for the destruction of the demon[2] Tāraka, or by his appearance as the son or daughter of Nanda as the fruit of the devotion of the herdswomen[3] and for the destruction of Kamsa and others, so neither His sole unity without a second nor His greatness are affected by His initiation in Tāntrik Mantras and the attainment of Siddhi in worships prescribed in the Tantra, done to show to the world the potency of Mantra.

It is needless to point out that Dattātreya, Gautama, Sanatkumāra, Kapila, Nārada, and other Ṛṣis were Tāntriks. Works such as the Dattātreya Samhitā, Gotama Tantra, Sanatkumāra Tantra, Kapila Pañcarātra, Nārada Pañcarātra, and others, are obvious proofs of it. Probably there is no Sādhaka who does not know of the great Ṛṣi Kātyāyana. Drawn by the intensity of his devotion, Devī Herself assumed the form of a girl, full of youth, and appeared at the foot of a bael tree on the sixth evening after the new moon, in the month of Āśvina, for the destruction of the Demon[2] Mahiṣa. Since then the Victrix of Mahiṣa has been worshipped in autumn[4] under the name of Kātyāyanī or daughter of Kātyāyana. It is this Ṛṣi Kātyāyana who is the author of the Gṛhya[5] of the Yajur Veda.

The Direct and Superior Power of Tantra

It seems the result of some great sin even to harbour the thought that upon the favourable or unfavourable opinion of other Śāstras the authority of that Tantra depends which keeps living and safe in the shadow of its mighty arms all things moving and unmoving in the universe and world of Sādhana from the creation of the First Self[6] to the great dissolution.[7] Authors of Smṛti, Samhitās, Purāṇas, and Darśanas, have, even after the practice for ages of severe austerities, failed to discover Her, and, prostrating themselves to the earth in obeisance, have said: "O Thou whose guṇas[8] are unknown to all Nigamas,[9] how can

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[1] Siddhi. [2] Asura. [3] The gopīs, who loved Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
[4] Śarat, the months of Bhādra and Āśvina.
[5] Gṛhya, or household sūtras of that Veda.
[6] Puruṣa or Ego. [7] Mahāpralaya. [8] Qualities, functions. [9] Tantras.

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we, O Mother, describe that beauty of Thine which is visible only to Paramaśiva ?"[1]

Again, it has been said: "O Mother, Creatrix of all ! who else is able and will dare to describe the greatness of Thy guṇas, which even Brahmā, the Lord of creation,[2] with his four mouths; the victor of Tripura, with his five mouths;[3] Kārtikeya, commander of the celestial armies, with his six mouths;[4] and Anantadeva, the Lord of serpents, with his thousand mouths,[5] are unable to describe ?"

Puṣpadanta has said: "If Sarasvatī herself were to write for unending ages with a pen made from an indestructible branch of the Kalpa-tree,[6] with ink in volume equal to that of the Black Mountain contained in the ocean as its pot, upon the wide surface of the earth as writing-paper, even then She would fail to record Thy guṇas."

It is a dangerous learning which to-day makes a man, in order to prove the authority of Tantra Śāstra, the word of Śiva Śakti (who is beyond the mind and speech of this world, Whose merciful regard the three worlds supplicate, whose meanest servants, the Yogīs, Ṛṣis, Munis, Siddhas, Sādhus, and Sādhakas,[7] are honoured throughout the world), depend on the words of the self-same Ṛṣis.

Learned man ! lay aside this learning of yours, and be not ashamed for having done so. If any have come to this world with a perverse intellect, you undoubtedly are their chief. Disputes, questionings, doubts, and misgivings on this subject arise in your and my minds. But in none of the Śāstras do we find those who are to remove our doubts themselves raising a whisper against Tantra. Nowhere therein do we find it questioned whether the Tantra Śāstra is authoritative or not. You will say

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[1] The Supreme Śiva. [2] Prajāpati.

[3] Śiva called Tripurāri from his victory over the Demon Tripura, or as some say, the three cities of the Asuras.

[4] Son of Śiva.

[5] Who, from under the nether worlds (pātāla), supports the universe on his head (see Viṣṇu Purāṇa ii, chap. 5).

[6] The heavenly tree, which granted all desire as its fruit.

[7] Adepts in Yoga, Seers, sages, the perfected (siddha), holy men, and religious men who practise Sādhana.

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that perhaps they had not such an all-embracing vision as we have got. But there is no "perhaps" in the matter. Such scepticism was not in their nature. You and I, though born of Brāhmaṇa parents, are to-day behaving like Caṇḍālas[1] through bad companionship. And so we consider it derogatory to our honour to bow our heads at the feet of our parents. But they were sons of Brāhmaṇas, and Brāhmaṇas themselves, and thus the sceptical question suitable only to a Caṇḍāla's nature never found a place in their minds. Where there is no question, how can there be an answer ?

Just as people fearlessly enter the palace of their King at the time of payment of their yearly taxes, and seek his protection when unavoidable danger appears, so, whenever any unavoidable difficulty has arisen in matters of worship or any ādhyātmik, ādhibhautik, or ādhidaivik danger[2] has arisen, all Śāstras have stood at the door of Tantra and given instructions in its name for man's safety. And at others times, whenever there has been occasion to describe practices,[3] rules of caste,[4] history, and the like, they have timidly assumed silence, considering the saying of Tantra to be as weighty and solemn as royal messages, and beyond penetration on their part. Consequently, they do not launch into a discussion upon Tantra at every word. This is not due to want of faith, but bespeaks perfect reverence on their part.

It is in Bengal alone that we hear people, now here, now there, raising the grating cry of "Tantra, Tantra!". But in other provinces, such as Mahārāṣṭra,[5] Drāvida,[6] Utkala,[7] Kāṣmīra, and Nepāla, people do not call that Śāstra, Tantra, but Mantra Śāstra, just as people do not take the name of their fathers, but call them "Father". The meaning of this is that worship of Īśvara[8] is every person's daily duty, and that Mantra is essentially necessary for worship. If Mantra be necessary, then one must necessarily ask the help of a Mantra Śāstra. If,

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[1] One of the lowest castes.
[2] See *post*.
[3] Ācāra.
[4] Varṇadharma.
[5] Mahrāṭṭa country.
[6] Dravidian country—Madras.
[7] Orissa.
[8] The "personal" God.

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in spite of such eternally valid evidence as the words of Śāstra, lives of Ṛṣis, immemorial practice, anyone still says "Unauthoritative" to such we, as followers of the Śāstra, will reply: "The Vedas, Smṛti and words inspired by the spirit of Dharma are authority, and if to any person all this is of no authority, then who will accept his words as authority?"

Such evidence is sufficient to prove the acquiescence of the Śāstras, but the acquiscence which is required by polemics is different.

In anticipation of danger from doubt, which is the characteristic of the Kali age, the great Ordainer has made adequate provision against it. Other Śāstras have repeatedly and clearly said: "The doubt of a person without faith is no example"—that is, should an unbeliever do any work ordained of Śāstra, and yet derive no benefit from it, then his case does not stand for an example, "because everywhere it is only a believer who is competent[1] for the performance of Vaidik rites." Whatever may be the reason, the Śāstra will only bear fruit for those who have faith in it. The matter is, however, otherwise with Tantra. For I cannot disbelieve it even though I be the greatest and most obdurate of sceptics. I may not have faith in Veda or Śāstra, in God, the next world, sin and righteousness, Heaven and Hell, yet I cannot but believe in Tantra.

Of the three forms of evidence[2]—namely, perception, inference, and Śāstra[3]—the sceptic[4] may not have faith in inference and Śāstra, but he yields to and accepts direct perception as the only true form of evidence. And thus, even though I be the greatest sceptic, I cannot ignore Tantra, which is a Pratyakṣa Śāstra[5]: "The potency of a thing does not wait upon intellectual recognition." Whether you believe it or not medicine has power, and will cure disease. It does not wait upon your intellectual recognition of the fact. There is an inherent power in fire to burn. It will burn the hand which is knowingly or un-

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[1] Adhikāra.
[2] Pramāṇa.
[3] That is, pratyakṣam, anumānam, Śabda.
[4] Nāstika, or disbeliever in the Vedas.
[5] A practical Śāstra of experience.

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knowingly put into it without waiting for the belief or unbelief of the owner of that hand or anyone else. Similarly Siddhi, the visible[1] fruit of the Tantra Śāstra, is the outcome of its natural potency. Whether you or I believe it or not, Tantra Śāstra will, when applied as directed by itself, bear visible[1] fruit. The combined determination of lakhs of persons such as you or I will not avail to prevent that. Relying on the strength of its own arms, Tantra does not recognize the efficacy of anything, call it reasoning or evidence, judgment or inference. All Śāstras, in making ordinances in conformity with Tantra, have guarded their individual honour. For as it would matter little to the sea if all the waves were to become cross and to turn their currents away from it, so it would matter little to the Tantra even if all other Śāstras were to go against it.

You may rush towards a lion with marshalled herds of furious elephants, but at the moment the resounding roar is heard of the maned King of Beasts, subduing even the loudest voices, then everyone will fly, one knows not whither. Similarly, place all Śāstras on one side and Tantra on the other, and then you will see that the directly perceptible[1] war cry of Mantras, resounding like the solemn booming of thunderclouds, will make them senseless, and disperse and drive them away to places of which there is no knowing. It is because of this eternally self-evident[1] superhuman virtue of the power of Mantra that the Tantra and the Devatā worshipped therein are eternally awake. Who will with impunity throw weapons of crooked and fallacious argument at one whose voice is guided by the Devatā, who directs all intellects in the Brahmāṇḍa, and who dwells in every heart? The fancies of inference[2] are ever trampled under foot by direct perception.[1] Tantra has therefore said: "Kulaśāstra[3] is eternal evidence, because it bears visible[1] fruit. Putting aside the sceptics, even such animals as beasts, birds, and the like, admit visible[1] things to be evidence. It is by force of the realization of such evident[1] fruit that Tantra has destroyed all perverse arguers. Who knows what will happen in the hereafter?[4] That is the best of all philosophies[5] which bears actual and visible[1]

[1] Pratyakṣa. [2] Anumānam. [3] Tantra.
[4] That is, in the next birth. [5] Darśana.

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fruit in this world." This is what Śāstra says. When, however, in society it is found that on many occasions Tāntrik rites bear no fruit, doubt arises in the people's mind. We ourselves are much pleased to see and hear all this. For where they complain of a want of fruits we do not discern it. Is it not a fruit if Svastyāyana[1] leads to dire consequences? Through our ill-fortune a mango-tree bears āmḍā,[2] or through lack of intelligence we wish an āmḍah-tree to bear mangoes. This it is which gives rise to the difficulty about fruit. Your and my belief that "we do a work according to the Śāstra" is really a wicked vanity on our part. And it is because Śāstra and Devatā are unable to bear with this insolence of ours that they shatter our conceit in giving us fruit the opposite of what we sought. And then we think "alas! what has happened? faith is shaken!" but if we understand the matter rightly it is only a wrong belief which is dissipated. Neither place, time, nor subject is according to faith, yet still there is the meaningless and unreasoning cry, "according to Śāstra".[3] Why should Śāstra tolerate this wrong? Śāstra ordains that a pūjā is to be held at dead of night. But maybe, either from fear of keeping up at night or attracted by the mahāprasāda,[4] you sit in worship in the early evening. Why then should not what is begun in early evening end in misfortune? For this reason Śāstra has said: "Who does not worship Mahāvidyā,[5] or repeat Mantras." It is only for want of one thing—namely, the proper disposition[6]—that there occurs a want of fruit. It is a very difficult thing to worship Her with a heart inspired with true feeling for Her. Rāmaprasāda has therefore said: She is to be sought through feeling. Can we without feeling find Her ?"

In fact, it is great foolishness to doubt Mantra or Devatā on account of one's own deficiencies. It bespeaks great stupidity to put out a fire by pouring water on it, and then to opine that

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[1] A rite to dispel evil and to bring about good.

[2] A sour, skinny fruit.

[3] That is, everyone nowadays is speaking of Śāstra, but none really cares for or applies it.

[4] The great food or flesh of the animal of sacrifice.

[5] The Devī.

[6] Bhāva.

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it has not the power to burn. Similarly, it is a heinous sin to misdo Tāntrik work and then to doubt Śāstra. It is always the mark of a weak, feminine nature to endeavour to establish one's superiority on the issue of a verbal quarrel, whereas it is the sign of a man to desire to conquer the world by the strength of one's own arms. Similarly reasoning, argument and inference may be the work of other Śāstras, but the work of Tantra is to accomplish superhuman and divine[1] events by the force of its own Mantras. The power to destroy, to banish, and control,[2] are, with others, matters of daily accomplishment. Thousands of great and accomplished Sādhakas still illumine all India with the glory of their austerities.[3] In every Indian cremation ground[4] the refulgent and divine halo of Bhairavas and Bhairavīs[5] is yet to be seen mingling with the light of the flames of funeral pyres, rending apart the waves of nocturnal darkness and illuminating the wide expanse of Heaven. Dead and putrefying corpses submerged[6] near cremation grounds are still brought to life by the force of the Sādhakas' Mantras, and made to render aid to Sādhana and Siddhi. Tāntrik Yogīs even now and in this world obtain, through the potency of Mantras, direct vision of the world of Devas, which lies beyond our senses. She, with dishevelled hair, the Dispeller of fear from the hearts of those who worship Her, still appears in great cremation grounds,[7] to give liberation to Her devoted Sādhakas, who, fearful, of this existence, make obeisance to and supplicate Her. Sādhakas still merge themselves in the Self of Brahman, laying their Brahmarandhra[8] at those lotus feet of Brahmamayī,[9] which are adored

[1] Daiva.
[2] Māraṇam, Uchchātanam, Vaśīkaraṇam.
[3] Tapas.
[4] Smaśāna, where Śavāsana, Muṇḍāsana, Latāsādhanā, and other Tantrik rites are practised.
[5] Adept Tāntrik men and women.
[6] Before and whilst awaiting burning, the corpse is placed in the sacred stream.
[7] Mahāsmaśānas, where some of the most difficult forms of Tāntrik Sādhana are practised. The auspicious Kālikā is thought of as with dishevelled hair (vigalitachikurā), and so is the hair of the devotee (see Karpūrādi stotra, verses 3, 10).
[8] The cavity of Brahman at the top of the head, here used for the head generally.
[9] The Devī.

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by Brahmā and other Devas. The throne of the Daughter of the Mountain[1] is still moved by the wondrous, attractive force of Mantras. This, in the eyes of Sādhakas, is the ever broad and royal road upon which they travel untiring to the city of liberation. Maybe there is nothing but darkness for the bedridden and dying blind man. Yet know that of a surety, oh blind man, that the darkness exists only in your eyes.

We are obliged to say something else. In Bengal a species of high-class creatures called "educated critics" has come into existence, who at every word are wont to say: "The Tantra Śāstra is a recent production. The age of the earth is 5,000 years in all. Within this period the creation of man dates 3,000 years. Previous to that his forbears were, according to some, frogs, and according to others, monkeys." Whose antiquarian researches have led to such discoveries? It is no wonder that they should deem the Tantra Śāstra a recent thing. We, too, cannot oppose or be sceptical of their views. Even if we think we shall not believe it, our intellect believes of itself. For had not such been the state of their forbears, why should the descendants be such as they are? Alas! O Providence,[2] we know not whether you ever dreamt of such a perversion of intellect, of such a disastrous change of nature in the children of Manu. Be the idea sound or superstitious, we still say: "From the time that the Devas were established in the seven heavens,[3] on the summit of Mount Sumeru, from that time we Brāhmaṇas have belonged to the race of Brahmā. So long as Gangā[4] endures on earth, we, too, shall endure in the race of Brahmā. So long as the sun and moon shine in the sky, we, too, shall endure in the race of Brahmā." In Śāstra alone does a Brāhmaṇa live, so that the existence of Brāhmaṇas and Śāstras are one and the same thing. Judging from the point of view of those for whom the creation of man is 3,000 years old, Tantra will be a recent creation of, say, a 100 years' age. Intelligent men must therefore now consider that within these 100 years only, in the midst of four or five revolutions caused by minor forms of Dharma,[5] in the course of contest

[1] The Devī as daughter of Himavat. [2] Vidhātā. [3] Svarga.
[4] The holy River Ganges. [5] Upadharma, used in a bad sense.

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with sceptics, the Tāntrik Śāstra and initiation have been promulgated and preached through heaven,[1] the mortal world,[2] and the nether world,[3] to the ears of every man and woman of every home in Bhāratavarṣa, consisting of Cīna, great Cīna,[4] Nepāla, Kāṣmīra, the Dravidian Land,[5] Mahārāṣtra,[6] Aṅga,[7] Baṅga,[8] Kaliṅga,[9] Saurāṣṭra,[10] Magadha,[11] Pāñcāla,[12] Utkala,[13] and other countries and continents beginning from the mount of sunrise to the mount of sunset.[14] What blessed criticism![15] It is on this account that old far-sighted grammarians gave the prefix "sam" instead of any other to samālocanā[16] (criticism). Historical critic, what shall we say to you? Valihari![17]

There is yet another sad thing to tell. In the community of worshippers there are a few persons belonging to the Vaiṣṇava sect[18] who believe that the Tantra is the Śāstra dealing with the worship[19] of Śaivas[20] and Śāktas[21] alone, and that it is in thorough antagonism to the Vaiṣṇava Dharma. We do not know what to say in reply to this. To those who hold such a belief we with folded hands put the question: "What Tantra is this?" The name of the Tantra of which they have heard from their Lords[22] is Svatantra,[23] while that which is Śāstra is called Tantra. When dealing with the subject of the characteristics of Tantra, it has been said that it is that which is "approved of by Vāsudeva".[24]

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[1] Svarga. [2] Martya. [3] Rasātala. [4] Mahācīna.
[5] Madras country. [6] Mahrāṭṭa country.
[7] Country about Bhagalpur, Tirhut. [8] Bengal.
[9] Part of Orissa described in the Tantras as from Pūri to the Kṛṣṇa River.
[10] Surat. [11] Southern portion of Behar.
[12] Punjab. [13] Orissa.
[14] Udayācala and Astācala: the mountains from which the sun is said to rise, and on which it sets, respectively.
[15] Samālocanā.
[16] A pun; the word "sam" in Bengali meaning "a clown".
[17] A form of exclamation which literally means "I am beaten. I have no words for it. Astounding."
[18] Worshippers of Viṣṇu.
[19] Upāsanā Śāstra. [20] Worshippers of Śiva.
[21] Worshippers of the Goddess, or of Śakti the Devī.
[22] Prabhu, the title by which the gosvāmīs, or religious preceptors of Vaiṣṇavas, are called by their disciples.
[23] Svatantra means "different". There is a play on the words, the meaning of the passage being that Tantra is Śāstra, but what they have heard is different, that is not Śāstra.
[24] Viṣṇu, Lord of Vaiṣṇavas (see *post*).

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In this there is nothing to which a true Vaiṣṇava can take exception. But then we have nothing to say to those with whom the objection lies, because they are Lords.[1] When they interpret the Śāstra of Devotion,[2] it seems that they are Lords of Vaiṣṇavas alone; but when they sit in judgement disproving Tantra, it would seem that they are Lords of Viṣṇu also; otherwise, how can they dare to disprove the words of their Lord?[3] If the Tantra Śāstra is hostile to Vaiṣṇavas, we then ask by whose grace did they receive that Viṣṇu Mantra, initiated in which they, in their pride of Vaiṣṇavism, cast sinister glances at the Tantra Śāstra? It is, indeed, a sign of great scepticism to be an enemy of Tantra after initiation in a Tāntrik Mantra. We know that honest Vaiṣṇava Sādhakas are never inimical to Tantra. But still, for those who are so mistaken, it is necessary to point out what the Tantra itself has to say in this respect.

Tantra says: "Kālī alone in the Kali age, Kṛṣṇa alone in the Kali age, Gopāla and Kālikā[4] in the Kali age, are the Devatās who are awake."[5]

"Mahākālī and Mahākāla exist in the manner of a grain of gram. Just as the grain of gram has on the outside a covering, and is in the inside divided into two equal portions closely touching each other, so the Parabrahman[6] is covered on the outside by Māyā, and exists interiorly as Śiva and Śakti in equal parts closely united the one to the other. It is this Paramātmā existing in the forms of Śiva and Śakti who is Mahārudra, Mahāviṣṇu, and Mahābrahmā. The one only Brahman is called and differentiated by the three names Brahma, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara.[7] But he who looks upon the different forms which pass under these different names as really different never attains liberation."[8]

In the Muṇḍamālā Tantra[9] it is said: "So long, O Supreme Devī, as it is thought that there is a different Spirit in different

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[1] Prabhu, the title referred in footnote on p. 206.
[2] Bhaktiśāstra. [3] Viṣṇu, by whom the Tantra is approved (*see post*).
[4] Kṛṣṇa and Kālī.
[5] That is, active; whose activities are efficacious.
[6] Literally, "Tattva of". [7] Śiva.
[8] Such as he who worships Viṣṇu, thinking him to be different from Śiva.
[9] Chap. vi.

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beings,[1] so long only is the world multiform, activities different, and feeling diverse; Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara distinct; Gaṇeśa, Dineśa,'[2] Vahni,[3] Varuṇa,[4] Kubera,[5] and the Dikpālas[6] different Devas; effort is of many kinds; beings are masculine, feminine, and neuter; bael leaves[7] are different from tulsi leaves,[8] Javā, Droṇa, and Aparājita[9] are different from Tulsi-leaves; the Divya, Vīra, and Paśu forms of worship are different,[10] the idea of difference exists in Tantra; different forms of worship are prescribed for different Devatās; and so long (O Mother of the world) is Hari[11] deemed separate from Hara, and so long (O Śivé)[12] are Kālī with the terrible jaws, She[13] with the beautiful matted hair,[14] Ṣoḍaśī and Bhairavī,[15] different Devīs; Bhuvaneśvarī, Cinnamastā, Annapūrṇa, Bagalomukkī, Mātangī, and Kamalātmikā[16] are different Devīs, and Sarasvatī and Rādhika[17] are distinct. As long as the notion of unity at the lotus feet of Bhavānī[18] does not exist, so long endeavours, activities, modes of worship, and practice are different, O Devī of fair body! O Śaṅkarī![19] when perception of the truth[20] grows in the lake of the Sādhaka's pure heart, then in the resplendent bloom of the flower of non-duality, which is the lotus feet of Tāriṇī,[21] the vision of one only Brahman, not only in all Devas and Devīs, but in every being[22] in the Samsāra, opens to the view of the Sādhaka."

"The Sādhaka who contemplates Maheśvarī,[23] knowing that She is not different from Guru,[24] Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, and

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[1] Jīva. [2] The Sun. [3] The Lord of Fire. [4] Lord of water.
[5] Lord of wealth. [6] The regents of the ten quarters. [7] Sacred to Śiva.
[8] The holy basil (ocymum sanctum), sacred to Viṣṇu.
[9] The hibiscus, drona (a white flower) and clitoria—flowers sacred to the Devī.
[10] The three different forms of Tāntrik worship (Upāsanā).
[11] Viṣṇu. [12] A title of the Devī.
[13] Tārā, one of the Daśamahāvidyā, or ten great forms of the Devī.
[14] Jaṭā. [15] Forms of the Devī. [16] *Ibid.*
[17] Sarasvatī is Devī of speech, and Rādhikā the beloved of Kṛṣṇa.
[18] Title of the Devī; Bhava is Śiva. The Devī and Vāyu Purāṇas say that the Devī is Bhavānī, as giving life to Bhāva.
[19] Śaṅkarī is feminine of Śaṅkara, a title of Śiva.
[20] Tattva. [21] Title of the Devī, as Saviour. [22] Jīva.
[23] Title of Devī, as spouse of Śiva, Maheśvara.
[24] Religious preceptor.

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Mantra, is undoubtedly Maheśvara[1] Himself, even though he be a Jīva."[2]

To say that the Śāstra in which such a universally accepted conclusion is the object of Sādhana and Siddhi, is yet antagonistic to Vaiṣṇavas, though it does not harm Tantra, yet smears the spotless Vaiṣṇava name with the mud of indelible infamy.

To bring about harmony in place of their quarrels, Puṣpadanta has said in the Mahimnāstava:[3] "All the conflict of opinion which exists in the threefold Śāstra,[4] Sāṅkhya,[5] Yoga, cult of Paśupati,[6] and Vaiṣṇava Śāstra,[7] is due to differences of ideas, and is nothing but the doubt whether this or that is the right path. But, O Lord! just as the waters of all rivers, in whatever direction they flow, and whether in straight or sinuous course, mingle in the end in one great ocean, so Śādhakas (whatever be the path they follow) are at their journey's close sure to meet each other in Thee Who art the one only ocean of Unity."

Sādhaka, know it for certain that that is the final conclusion of every Śāstra, be it Veda or Tantra.

There are present-day Vaiṣṇavas who revel in daily new emotions,[8] who are not satisfied with the forms[9] of the ten incarnations[10] of Bhagavān, or the four armed Nārāyaṇa Vāsudeva dwelling in Vaikuṇṭha,[11] nor even[12] with the conjoined[13] form of Bhagavān Śri Kṛṣṇa, the perfect incarnation, and who in many instances abandon the Caitanyaless[14] Mantra of Viṣṇu and Kṛṣṇa worshipped by their forefathers, and received by them at the time of initiation, and get initiated in a Mantra which has

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[1] Śiva. [2] An embodied spirit; here, "man".

[3] Hymn in praise of the greatness of Śiva.

[4] Trayī—the Veda. So called because it consists of the three things—song, prose, and verse; or because the first three Vedas are alone included.

[5] Philosophical school. [6] The Tantra.

[7] Śāstras dealing with the cult of Viṣṇu.

[8] Rasa. [9] Mūrti. [10] Avatāra of Viṣṇu. [11] Viṣṇu's heaven

[12] Yugalamūrti, or that in which the persons of both Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā are shown together.

[13] Pūrṇa avatāra. [14] See next note.

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Caitanya in it.[1] Amongst such people there are many who say that it were better if Tantra Śāstra ceased to exist. They have both the daring and the opportunity to say this because, considering the nature of the daily novel Mantras in which they are initiated, and which are found neither in Veda, Purāṇa, nor Tantra, the existence of the Tantra Śāstra is a source of danger to them. However that may be, it is not necessary to waste time in writing about them. The only refuge of the Hindu race is the tree of Veda, which is manvantaras[2] and kalpāntaras[3] old. The five forms[4] of Tāntrik worship are its five branches.

It is by no means impossible that now, towards the end of the Kali age, a few parasites should be found growing on some of its branches. Those, however, who know the original tree will recognize the parasites the moment they see the leaves. However that may be, we do not consider them as included in any of the five communities of worshippers, and are therefore unable to accept their opinion as that of Hindu society. We know them only as Vaiṣṇavas who are initiated according to Śāstra in Viṣṇu Mantras. If they want to destroy the Tantra Śāstra they will simply destroy themselves, because the Viṣṇu Mantras themselves are stated in Tantra alone. To become inimical to Tantra owing to enmity with Śāktas,[5] caused by difference in practice, is like turning a father out of home because of a quarrel with a brother.

There is another thing of which we are ashamed even to think. We are really pained to see so much anger and enmity in Vaiṣṇavas who worship such an amiable, peaceful, smiling, and sweet-faced Devatā, and who daily eat haviṣya[6] without

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[1] There is here both pun and sarcasm. Caitanya means consciousness or intelligence, and is also the name of the celebrated Vaiṣṇava Saint who is the head of a large section of the Vaiṣṇavas. The meaning is that some people have the audacity to think that the Mantra of Viṣṇu is without caitanya (acaitanya)—that is, without consciousness—because not associated with the Saint Caitanya and to think that a Mantra associated with the same Caitanya has alone consciousness (sacaitanya).

[2] A manvantara is a fourteenth part of a Kalpa (see *post*).

[3] A Kalpa, or day of Brahma, is 4,320.000,000 years.

[4] Vaiṣṇavas, Śaivas, Śāktas, Sauras, Gāṇapaṭyas.

[5] Worshippers of Śakti, or the Devī.

[6] A very pure form of food, prepared with fruit, vegetable, and rice.

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flesh. If in this matter they were to ask their Gurus, instead of venting independent opinions of their own, then we, too, shall be saved. If Tantra Śāstra be deemed merely the Śāstra of the Śāktas, then by the grace of what Śāstra have Vaiṣṇavas and the Gosvāmīs of the well-known families of Advaita, Nityānanda, and others, who are Gurus of the Vaiṣṇavas, and who give initiation, preserved their great glory so long? Blinded by anger, people often forget their relation with others, and abuse them, but that is another matter. As a fact, both Śāktas and Vaiṣṇavas are equally initiated in Tāntrik Mantras. The authority of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata is held by the Vaiṣṇavas in much higher esteem than that of any other Purāṇa or Tantra. That Śrīmad Bhāgavata[1] says: "He who would free himself of the bond of the heart should worship Bhagavān in the manner prescribed in Tantra." Again, after referring to the forms of worship prescribed in both Veda and Tantra, it refers separately to the Tāntrik form of worship for the Kali age, and says: "Hear also how worship is to be performed in the Kali age according to the ordinance of various Tantras."

Commenting on this verse Śrīdharasvāmī says: "By a separate reference again the superiority of the Tāntrik path in the Kali age is shown."

In the same work Bhagavān counselled Uddhava, the crest-gem of devotees, as to what should be done in His own worship. "In all parvas[2] in the year provision should be made for Jātrās[3] and Valis[4] in my honour. Vaidik initiation[5] and Tantrik initiation should be received successively, and the Cāturmāsya,[6] Ekādaśī,[7] and other Vratas[8] should be observed." Again, "All articles of Pūjā, such as water for washing the feet,[9] for sipping,[10]

[1] Eleventh Book.
[2] Auspicious tithis (or lunar days) for religious observances.
[3] Festivals in the worship of Kṛṣṇa, such as Rathajātrā, Ḍolajātrā, Snānajātrā.
[4] Worship (pūjā) with offerings.
[5] Dīkṣā.
[6] Four monthly.
[7] On the eleventh lunar day after new or full moon.
[8] Occasional and voluntary religious observances.
[9] Pādyam.
[10] Ācamanam.

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and the others,[1] should be set out in order. Marking out a seat for me with Dharma and other Śaktis, nine in all, make therein a lotus of eight petals bright with the pollen of its womb. Then worship me with Mantras prescribed in both the Veda and Tantra Śāstras for the attainment of Siddhi in both." Here Śrīdharasvāmī has in his Commentary laid down that worship, according to both Veda and Tantra, is requisite for the acquisition of both enjoyment[2] and liberation,[3] as stated in both Veda and Tantra. "Worship of me is of three kinds—namely, Vaidik, Tāntrik, and mixed (that is, Vaidik and Tāntrik and mixed, or Paurāṇik). I should be duly adored according to all the three forms."[4] "If the Sādhaka adores me by the Vaidik and Tāntrik paths of Kriyayoga,[5] he will receive from me siddhi in both Veda and Tantra."

We ask those who have faith in Bhagavān and the Bhāgavata whether they have faith in these commands of Bhagavān, as stated in the Bhāgavata. Now the Sādhaka, who stands arbitrator in the dispute, will see whether the Tāntrik initiation and Scripture do not form the very life's stay for the Vaiṣṇava who follows Śāstra. When the time for the dissolution of a family comes, we find that both inmates and outsiders become of the same mind, and so through the misfortune of the present Āryan society we find that in many cases to be so.

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[1] That is, the other (ordinarily fourteen) upacāras.

[2] Bhoga.

[3] Mokṣa.

[4] The author's Bengali translation appears here to differ somewhat from the Sanskrit, which runs: "Trayāṇāmīpsitenaiva vedhinā mām samarchchayet," or "I should be adored by whichever of the three forms it is desired."

[5] Yoga of work.

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CHAPTER IV

GĀYATRĪ MANTRA[1] AND IMAGE WORSHIP[2]

ALTHOUGH all admit that the Gāyatrī is the fundamental part[3] of worship as directed in Śāstra, yet the characteristics of the present time make it necessary to consider it both in some degree separately, and also in connection with Tantra. For there are nowadays some who even ask: "What is the necessity for the adoption of Tāntrik Mantras when there is the Vaidik Gāyatrī?" The reply is that there is no necessity if necessity for initiation ends with initiation; but those who, on the contrary, have to perform worship based on initiation must certainly be reinitiated according to the Tantra. For in the Kali age worship of Gāyatrī is not possible according to the Vaidik method. Without reinitiation in Tāntrik Mantra, worship of the Gāyatrī even cannot be considered to be accomplished. Should anyone on that account regret because he thinks the Gāyatrī is disgraced thereby then Gāyatrī Herself[4] will judge the matter. But there is no cause for lament. There is no fear that the line will fail even if the son should feel himself insulted and therefore die, when the grandson is taken in the arms. It is asked, what is the necessity? But we ask, where is even the want of it. Who will say that the boy who has passed the matriculation examination will not in time be eligible for studies suitable for a degree examination? However that may be, more of this hereafter. At present let us discuss what Gāyatrī is according to Āryan notions. Is the Gāyatrī mere words or Mantra? If it be merely the former, how can it be so supreme as to be accepted as the fundamental part[5] of worship, the supreme Brahman Himself? If

[1] Gāyatrītattva. The Gāyatrī, the famous Mantra, is the essential tattva of Vedas: "Om, let us contemplate upon the wonderful spirit of the Divine Creator of the terrestrial, atmospheric, and celestial regions. May he direct our minds (towards the acquisition of Dharma, Artha, Kāma and Mokṣa)."

[2] Sākāra upāsana.

[3] Tattva.

[4] For the Mantra is the Devī Herself.

[5] Tattva or principle.

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the glory of Gāyatrī is due merely to its being a great saying, weighty and solemn, pure, full of sense and truth, then there are hundreds of thousands of great sayings in Āryan Śāstras which are equally replete with truth, and marked with more feeling and sweetness. Why, instead of worshipping them, do we worship Gāyatrī alone as the essential portion[1] of all the Vedas? Why am I, whether learned or ignorant, with or without understanding, called a Brāhmaṇa provided I am initiated according to Śāstra in the Gāyatrī Mantra? Putting aside the world, why has the Lord of it said: "Every Brāhmaṇa is my body, be he learned or unlearned." In Śrīmad Bhāgavata, Śrī Bhagavān has said: "Even this four-armed form[2] dwelling in Vaikuṇṭha is not dearer to me than a Brāhmaṇa. A Brāhmaṇa is full of all Vedas, and I, too, am full of all Devas." That is to say, the world is maintained by both Veda and Devatā, and both are therefore equally worshipful. But as all Vedas and myself who are full of all Devas, unite in the Brahman body of a Brāhmaṇa, the latter is the most worshipful of all.[3] "Malicious and misguided men who know not this truth slight me who am the all-pervading Supreme Spirit, the Guru of the three worlds, and Brāhmaṇa in form, by worshipping my images and symbols only" (that is to say, by omitting to worship a Brāhmaṇa as Bhagavān). Manu says: "On the birth of a Brāhmaṇa, Īśvara Himself[4] is born on earth in order to guard the sheath of Dharma of all creations." For him who neglects the Gāyatrī, Sāstra again says in the Gāyatrī Tantra: "It is the embodied spirit of a twice-born person formed of Gāyatrī who is the worshipper of Devatā, and not the body nor senses, nor anything else. Viṣṇu, Śiva and other Devatās are fit objects of worship for him only who is such a Devatā. A Brāhmaṇa who neglects the Gāyatrī should not touch tulsi leaves nor take the name of Hari. A twice-born who neglects the Gāyatrī is like the lowest Caṇḍāla. What will he gain by worshipping Śrī-Kṛṣṇa? If through ill-fortune a miscreant who forsakes Mantra, Guru and Deva is born in one's

[1] Tattva or principle. [2] Mūrti.
[3] A Brāhmaṇa is called "earth-deva," (Bhūdeva).
[4] The Lord.

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family, he as well as all his kith and kin of the same gotra[1] should do expiation for it. An effigy made of fifty kuśa leaves should be burnt according to the rules prescribed in Veda. Otherwise his sin will soon enter into all his relatives of the same gotra, and such as come in contact with him will share in his guilt. In the Kali age the number of such sinners will daily and particularly increase." Again in the same Tantra it is said: "The twice-born who through wilfulness or neglect omits to do japa[2] of the Gāyatrī is of a surety born of the seed of a Yavana.[3] The Brāhmaṇa who is without faith in even the Gāyatrī is, O Devī, truly a Yavana, and being such how can he repeat the Gāyatrī ? Fallen is the country in which that sinful Yavana dwells, and fallen also is the Ruler of that country. Brāhmaṇas who associate with him are fallen and infamous. Food given by a person who neglects the Gāyatrī is worse even than food given by a Yavana. It were better to partake of the food of a Yavana than even to drink water brought by a sinner who neglects the Gāyatrī."

Why? Why is it that the influence of a few words makes a man worthy of adoration by Devatās? And again, why is it that the want of those few words makes him the lowest Caṇḍāla, lower than a Yavana?[4] The Śāstra has neither enmity nor friendship with Jīva. It rebukes none and caresses none. It says only what is true. If anyone's feelings are wounded on account of the statement of a truth, then not he who utters that truth but the truth itself must be considered the cause, and therefore inquiry should be made into that. The truth about Jīva will be revealed if the true principles[5] concerning Gāyatrī, according to Śāstra, are discovered. In fact, it is because we do not know the true nature[5] of Gāyatrī that we hear of all these "why's". The moment we realize the true aspect of Gāyatrī then no "why" will remain. Then we shall understand that there can never be distrust in Gāyatrī unless a Brāhmaṇa's nature becomes fundamentally corrupt, and that in such a case the

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[1] Lineage. [2] Recitation of Mantra.
[3] Foreigner. [4] Foreigner.
[5] Gāyatrī Tattva, or the nature of or principles concerning Gāyatrī. In a general way Gāyatrī Tattva means the subject of Gāyatrī.

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epithets of Caṇḍāla and Yavana are not exaggerated, but merely appropriate expressions. The authors of Śāstra knew at least as well as you or I that it is of little moment whether a few words are said or not. You or I have not done well in thinking that the Gāyatrī, which even a muni,[1] who has taken a vow of silence, may not omit to inwardly repeat without ceasing to be a twice-born, is mere language and words. It should be understood that that which makes a Brāhmaṇa by its presence and a Yavana by its absence is not mere language, but the great supersensual Mantraśakti[2] which controls the Brahmāṇḍa, and appears as eternal consciousness; and that what we have taken for mere words and feet of verse is not so, but a great Mantra, full of brilliance appearing in the form of characters replete with transcendent principles.[3] A firestick[4] may be only an ordinary piece of wood to a Śavara[5] gathering fuel in the forest, but to the performer of sacrifice with the fire it is a veritable womb which bears luminous fire. Similarly the Gāyatrī may appear only a string of letters to an unbeliever, but to a Sādhaka of divine wisdom it is a very mass of radiant shining energy[6] of Mantra. Just as when, sitting even in a dark room, the sacrificer lights the sacrificial fire by the friction of fire-sticks, and by casting the offerings in that fire offers full oblation[7] in homa,[8] so the sādhaka living in the deep dark samsāra illumines the cave of his heart with the light of Brahman,[9] kindled by the friction of mind and Mantra. He then offers to that burning fire of the Parabrahman in the fire-pit of consciousness[10] existing as mind engirdled with the three guṇas, all the three forms of action done in waking, dream, and dreamless sleep, whether sāttvik, rājasik, or tāmasik,[11] and whether by mind, speech, or action, and lives in a state of constant and perfect liberation.

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[1] Sage or saint.

[2] Mantra power.

[3] Gāyatrī Tattva, or the nature of or principles concerning Gāyatrī. In a general way Gāyatrī Tattva means the subject of Gāyatrī.

[4] Araṇi. [5] Caṇḍāla. [6] Tejas.

[7] Āhuti. [8] The sacrifice into fire. [9] Brahmatejas. [10] Caitanya.

[11] That is, possessing the characteristics of the three guṇas—sattva, rajas, and tamas.

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The effect of mere language is to produce ideas of skill and emotions and sweetness, whilst that of Mantra is to stimulate the mental faculties with the divine radiant energy,[1] and to thus lead to a full understanding of constantly visible supersensual realities.[2] A mere collection of words is something gross, whilst Mantra is full of consciousness. A word is a mere display of letters, whilst Mantra is a mass of radiant energy. Sayings give advice to men of the world, whilst Mantras awaken[3] superhuman Śakti. A mere saying is, therefore, like a Jīva, subject to birth and death; whilst a Mantra is Brahman Himself, unwasting, undecaying. So long as there is a difference between gross matter and consciousness, between Jīva and Brahman, so long will there exist this difference between a saying and a Mantra—a difference as wide as that between the heaven and the nether world. This is why, as regards the Gāyatrī, the notion that sayings and Mantra are identical is a false and mistaken idea. In order to guard ourselves against it, we must first understand the word-meaning of Mantra, and then proceed to deal with Mantra Śakti.[4] In the Gāyatrī Tantra it is said: "That is called Mantra by the meditation[5] upon which Jīva acquires freedom from sin, enjoyment of heaven, and liberation,[6] and by the aid of which he attains in full the fourfold fruit."[7] Again: "Because She is sung (gītā) in meditation from Mūlādhāra[8] to Brahmarandhra[9]—that is to say, She enjoying the music of the lute,[10] ever resides as the Mother, consisting of the fifty letters in the regions which extend from the four-petalled to the thousand-petalled lotus[11]—therefore is She *gāyat*,[12] and because, if meditated upon, She gives liberation (trāṇa) to Jīva by the piercing of the sheath of the Ṣaṭcakra,[13] therefore is She *trī*. By the combi-

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[1] Tejas. [2] Tattvas. [3] Literally, make to shine.
[4] Power of Mantra. [5] Manana. [6] Mokṣa.
[7] That is, dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa.
[8] The lowest Cakra in the perinaeal region.
[9] The cavity of Brahman on the crown of the head. [10] Vīṇā.
[11] That is, from the Mūlādhāra padma to the Sahasrāra padma.
[12] "Sung".
[13] That is, the process called Ṣaṭcakrabheda by which the roused Kuṇḍalinī pierces and ascends the six Cakras until She unites with the Śiva of the Sahasrāra.

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nation of *gāyat* and *trī* is formed the word Gāyatrī, which is the name of that great Śakti who consists of Mantra."

In another Tantra it has been said: "Mantra is so called because it is achieved by a mental process. Dhyāna is meditation. In Samādhi[1] the self merges with the Self of the Iṣṭadevata,[2] and Homa is so called because in it offerings are made."

The nature of mind and its faculties is thus explained in Śāstra:[3] "Mind is the master of the ten senses, and is situate in the centre of the lotus of the heart. It is also called antahkaraṇa,[4] because, without the senses, it has no power of action as regards external things—that is, if the ear does not hear a sound, if the skin does not feel a touch, or if the eye does not see a form, if the tongue does not perceive a taste, or if the nose does not perceive a smell, mind becomes incapable of perceiving the nature of anything. The mastery of mind consists in this alone, that when the senses have been directed each on its own object, mind sits in judgment on them. Mind examines what is good and what is bad. Mind has three guṇas[5]—namely, sattva, rajas, and tamas. It is from these guṇas that all the different changing states[6] of mind arise. The guṇas being three, therefore, the three mental states are also threefold according as they are sāttvik, rājasik, and tāmasik. The sāttvik states are non-attachment to the world,[7] forgiveness, generosity, and the like. The rājasik states are passion, anger, greed, striving, and the like; and laziness, error, lethargy, and the like, are tāmasik states. Sāttvik states lead only to virtuous acts, rājasik only to sin, and tāmasik states give rise neither to sin nor virtue, but merely waste a life, which is spent to no purpose."

"Antahkaraṇa"[8] is fourfold—namely, manas, of which the function is doubt;[9] buddhi, of which the function is

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[1] Ecstasy. [2] That is, the Deity which a particular person worships.
[3] The Pañchadaśī. [4] Literally, means "doing inside".
[5] Qualities or principles. [6] Vikāra. [7] Vairāgya.
[8] The antahkaraṇa, which is the ego in general (Ahomartha antahkaraṇa sāmānyam—Yoga Vāśiṣṭha), is really one, though its functions are distinguished as above.
[9] Manas is that mental faculty which considers whether the subject presented to it is this or that—"doubt"—manah sankalpa vikalpakātmakam (Sāṅkhya Tattva Kaumudi).

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certainty;[1] and ahaṅkāra[2] and citta,[3] of which the functions are egoism and remembrance[4] respectively.

The function of antahkaraṇa, consisting of doubt, is called "manas"; the function of antahkaraṇa, consisting of certainty, is called "buddhi"; the function of antahkaraṇa, consisting of self-consciousness, is called "ahaṅkāra"; and the function of antahkaraṇa, consisting of remembrance, is called "citta". In the sphere of worship "citta" occupies the first place. Remembrance of Mantra and Devatā, contemplation on the meaning of Mantra, and meditation on Devatā, and all such related matters, are accomplished by processes of the function of "citta". The meaning of "akṣa" is sense. The taking cognizance by the senses of anything is called in the Śāstra "pratyakṣa".[5] A sense devoid of consciousness cannot perceive. The senses are but the doors through which the antahkaraṇa perceives all directly perceptible things. This is the reason why in dreamless sleep,[6] swoon, and delirium, the mind, being unable to function, even things close by are not perceived, despite the existence of the senses. When mind has perceived a thing through the gate of sense, the thought of that thing continues like the steady flow of a current in the antahkaraṇa, which is not possessed by anything else. But just as innumerable waves rise and fall during the rainy seasons upon the heaving bosom of a river, so various operations of the mind, working upon the innumerable things of the outside world, come and go in the antahkaraṇa of Jīva. In consequence, no particular function of the mind is stationary even for a moment. Some other appears and thrusts it aside. That process by which the antahkaraṇa endeavours to put aside

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[1] After manas functions it presents its object to the self, which sets itself as subject against it. Then Buddhi, which is determination (Adyavasāya buddhi, ii chapter, xiii Sūtra, Sāṅkhya Pravacana Darśanam), follows with its quality of certainty (Niścayakariṇī).

[2] Self-consciousness—the ego recognizing itself (abhimāna ahaṅkāra, ii chap. xvi Sūtra, *ibid.*)

[3] A term, in its wide signification meaning "mind" or the antahkaraṇa in general, but here meaning that which functions as cintā, "contemplation" of a present or remembered object of thought. In Sāṅkhya, as opposed to Vedānta, Cintā is included in Buddhi.

[4] Involved in all contemplation.

[5] Direct perception.

[6] Suṣupti.

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plated. But in this there is a difficulty. The attributes Brahman is beyond the range of the mind, speech, or senses, and how can mind think or citta remember that which is not within the range of the senses. If it is impossible even in dream to see anything which has not been previously perceived by the senses, how is it possible to do so when awake? The contemplation of the Gāyatrī Mantra is thus rendered impossible. Secondly, the attributeless Brahman is beyond all attributes. That which is such shows neither favour nor disfavour, neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction, so that nothing should be desired or expected from it in this Samsāra. And what is the use of going to that from which nothing can be obtained, of which nothing can be expected, and to whom nothing is near, and nothing is distant?

It may be said that Gāyatrī does not ask anyone to go or come, but only to sit down and meditate. But meditation is not possible without mind. The latter is intimately associated with the three qualities. The supreme Brahman is without them. It is, therefore, as impossible to hold the firmament between a pair of tongs as it is to worship the attributeless Brahman by a mind with attributes. Thirdly, whether we be on the paths of knowledge,[1] devotion,[2] or work,[3] worship of the Brahman without attribute is against all opinions, reason, and Śāstra. "The mental process by which the self is related to the Brahman with attributes is called worship." For this reason it would have been preferable that anything else than worship should be done in relation to the attributeless Brahman, which it is supposed the Gāyatrī seeks to establish. But how can we help it? The Śāstra has, again, said: "The twice-born—that is, Brāhmaṇas, Kṣattriyas, and Vaiśyas—are all Śāktas,[4] and not Śaivas or Vaiṣṇavas; for they all worship Gāyatrī Devī, the Mother of the Vedas." This means that, whatever one may become afterwards, whether Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Saura,[5] or Gāṇapatya,[6] one is at base a Śākta.

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[1] Jñāna. [2] Bhakti. [3] Karma.
[4] Worshippers of the Devī, as opposed to worshippers of Śiva and Viṣṇu.
[5] Worshipper of the sun. [6] Worshipper of Ganeśa.

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For Gāyatrī, who is the Mother of the Vedas, and from whom a person derives his twice-born character, is Herself an embodiment of mighty Śakti.

Here also it has been said: "All worship Gāyatrī Devi". How can one who is attributeless be made the subject of a mind with attributes? Fourthly, it is said that the Brahman which Gāyatrī seeks to establish is attributeless. Śāstra, however, says that, when meditating on Gāyatrī during japa,[1] She should be contemplated under three forms according as it is morning, noon, or evening. In the morning She is Gāyatrī, and appears as a young girl, rosy like the young sun. She is two-armed Brāhmaṇī,[2] riding a swan,[3] holding in her hand rudrākṣa beads,[4] the thread, and begging-bowl,[5] residing in the disc of the sun, the presiding Devī[6] of the Ṛgveda. At noon She is Sāvitrī, and appears as a young woman, dark as the petals of a blue lotus. She is Vaiṣṇavī,[7] riding the bird Garuda, holding in Her four arms a conch shell,[8] discus,[9] mace,[10] and a lotus, residing in the orb of the sun, the presiding Devī of the Yajurveda. In the evening She is Sarasvatī, and appears as an older woman of spotless white beauty. She is three-eyed Rudrāṇī,[11] crowned with the crescent moon, riding a bull, holding a trident[12] and drum,[13] residing in the solar disc, the presiding Devī of the Sāmaveda.

In the commentary of Śaṅkarācārya on Sandhya,[14] as prescribed in the Yajurveda, the following passages are quoted:

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[1] That is, Dhyāna, during recitation (japa) of mantra, as the Catholic, when saying the rosary, thinks, of each scene of the joyful, sorrowful, or glorious mysteries.

[2] Feminine aspect or Śakti of Brahmā.

[3] Hamsa, which is also described as a goose or flamingo, the vehicle (Vāhana) of Brahmā.

[4] The seed of a fruit, used for mālā (rosary), etc.

[5] Kamaṇḍalu, used by ascetics to cary food given to them.

[6] Adhiṣṭatrī.

[7] Feminine aspect or Śakti of Viṣṇu, whose Vāhana is the Bird-King Garuda.

[8] Śaṅkha.

[9] Cakra.

[10] Gadā, all three held by Viṣṇu.

[11] Feminine aspect or Śakti of Rudra (Śiva), whose Vāhana is a bull.

[12] Triśūla.

[13] Damaru, a small "hour-glass" drum, held as well as the trident by Śiva.

[14] Daily worship, performed at morning, noon, and eventide.

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"Gāyatrī at morn, Sāvitrī at noon, Sarasvatī at eventide. She bears these names at these three times of the day, and She herself is Sandhyā at all three times (Vyāsa).

"The morning Sandhyā is Gāyatrī, the noon Sandhyā is Sāvitrī, and the evening Sandhyā is Sarasvati" (Yājñavalkya).

"Gāyatrī is red, Sāvitri is white (according to some [1] Veda), and Sarasvatī is dark (according to some [1] Veda). These three appearances of Gāyatrī have been mentioned for the three Sandhyās. In meditation at other times She should be contemplated upon as being of a white colour" (Vyāsa).

"Three-footed Gāyatrī who in Her three feet embodies the three Śaktis [2] of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara; Her alone should the twice-born seek and worship in three forms."

Again, it has been ordained that this very Gāyatrī, who appears as Śakti, should be contemplated as a male at the time of prāṇāyāma [3] thus:

"At the time of inspiration [4] of breath contemplate (according to some [1] Veda) the Mahātmā [5] dark as the petals of a blue lotus, with four arms in the circle of the navel. At the time of retention of breath [6] contemplate (according to some [7] Veda) Brahmā, the grandfather of the world, [8] red of body, with four mouths seated on a lotus in the region of the heart. At expiration [9] of breath contemplate Maheśvara, [10] the Destroyer of sin, clear, fair and white, like the purest crystal in the region of the forehead."

Oh, thou Brāhmaṇa, who hast privilege [11] in Veda and worshippest Gāyatrī, tell me now, do these forms represent that aspect of the Brahman which is without attributes?

Whether the Brahman be with or without attribute, and possessed of form or not, will be hereafter discussed. Śāstra says that the Brahman whom the Gāyatrī speaks of is without attribute, but it also says that at time of japa and prāṇāyāma His form with attributes should be contemplated. How are

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[1] *Sic* in original.
[2] Powers.
[3] Regulation of breath, or breath exercises (see *Introduction to Tantra Śastra*).
[4] Pūraka.
[5] Great Spirit; here Viṣṇu.
[6] Kumbhaka.
[7] *Sic* in original.
[8] Loka.
[9] Recaka.
[10] Śiva.
[11] Literally, "enjoyest adhikāra in Veda."

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we to harmonize these two statements of Śāstra? If in Gāyatrī He is explained to be without attribute, why does Śāstra again enjoin that He should be contemplated with attributes? How shall we establish a concordance between these apparently conflicting statements? We shall deal with this matter afterwards. But here we ask why has this conflict come about? Has Śāstra itself the power to determine anything in him?[1] Of course not. Is it not bound to say that which He really is? Had the Śāstra been the creation of mere human authorship then there would certainly have been much ground both for affirmance and denial. But according to the Āryan view Śāstra is not a human production, but the production of Him concerning whom these questions arise. How then can objection arise as to why the Śāstra has said this or that? Bhagavān Himself takes his own portraits in His own camera. These portraits reproduce the different appearances in which He is sitting before it. His will is the sole cause of these differences. For this reason an objection as to why Śāstra has said this or that is fundamentally impossible.

The Vācya[2] and Vācaka[2] Śaktis of a Mantra

Sādhakas will particularly bear in mind that not only in the Gāyatrī but in every Mantra there are two Śaktis—the Vācya Śakti and the Vācaka Śakti. The Devata who is the subject of a Mantra,[3] is the Vācya Śakti, and the Devatā who is the Mantra itself[4] is Vācaka Śakti. For instance, the Devatā presiding[5] over all Viṣṇu Mantras is Durgā in the Mantra of the hymn of one thousand names of Durgā. Durgā is the Devatā and Mahāmāyā is the Śakti. In the hymn of a thousand names of Viṣṇu, Paramātmā Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Devatā, and the son of Devakī[6] is the Śakti, and so on. As the seed lies inside the fruit so the Vācya Śakti lies within the Vācaka Śakti. As one cannot see the seed without penetrating through the fruit, so

[1] Literally, "to build or break anything about Him."
[2] These terms are explained in the text.
[3] Pratipādya Devatā.
[4] Mantramayī Devatā.
[5] Adhiṣṭātri residing in or presiding over. Every mantra has its Adhiṣṭātrī Devatā.
[6] Mother of Kṛṣṇa.

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one cannot perceive the true nature of the Vācya Śakti without first worshipping the Vācaka Śakti. It is the Vācya Śakti who is the life of a Mantra, and the Vācaka Śakti is that by which such life is sustained. Without life what is there to sustain? And if it be not sustained life is not possible. For this reason, without both of these two Śaktis a Mantra cannot even be awakened[1] and Siddhi cannot be obtained in it.[2] In particular, without worship of the Vācaka Śakti life cannot be infused into a Mantra.[3] To think of Sādhana and Siddhi in connection with an unconscious Mantra is as though one were to take a dead child in one's lap, and hope to attain worldly prosperity with its help. By worship[4] the Sādhaka must here understand not the worship of the twentieth century spreading like some contagious disease, but the worship ordained by Śāstra for the Āryan race. For the fruit of this worship, to which we shall refer, is stated in the Śāstra. The Mantra of this worship is not prayer or self-dedication, ending in roaring thunder and storm-clouds in an autumnal sky.[5] The first fruit of its utterance is a shower of glances from Devās powerful enough to deluge the universe, and the last is the wealth of Siddhi. As the waters of earth drawn by the sun gather in the sky, and then fall on the earth as rain and are dried up, and again and again are drawn by the sun, and fall and are dried up, so is this dualistic world drawn towards the brilliant solar orb which is the subject of the Gāyatrī, and then descends as knowledge of the non-dualistic truth,[6] flooding the dry dualistic samsāra, making a current of non-dualistic Brahma-knowledge and Brahma-bliss to flow all over the dualistic universe, setting aside illusive dualism, drawing non-dualistic knowledge towards Her from whom dualistic existence originates. And in the meantime the wealth of the

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[1] That is, there is no mantracaitanya. Unless the mantra is awakened in and by the consciousness of the sādhaka the mantra thus becoming parcel of the consciousness of the sādhaka himself, it is mere dead sound and letter and without fruit.

[2] Mantrasiddhi (see *Introduction to Tantra Śastra*).

[3] The conditioned consciousness necessarily works by and through form (which is the nature of its thinking) to the formless "That" which manifests to the sādhaka in worship as form.

[4] Upāsanā. [5] That is, in moaning, weeping, etc. [6] Tattva.

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eight Siddhis[1] grows and ripens, filling the vast universe, the field of action[2] belonging to that worthy cultivator the Sādhaka. For this reason we are not to understand by the Gāyatrī Mantra the beginning of a storm, but the Mother, who is fair as clouds laden with water. The attributesless Vācya Śakti, who is the subject of the Gāyatrī, knows that Her aspect without attribute is unapproachable by Jīvas who have attributes. She has therefore blessed the world of devotees by the assumption of form with attributes favourable to the Sādhana and Siddhi of the Sādhaka, and it is this form dwelling in the hearts of devotees which is the Vācaka Śakti resident in the Gāyatrī Mantra. It is the lustre of Her colours, white, yellow, blue, and red, which manifests itself in the lustre of Kulakuṇḍalinī,[3] voicing the fifty letters of the Alphabet. It is of Herself that every letter speaks. Śāstra therefore says: "Oh, Muni, who can relate the unparalleled greatness of that Ādyā Śakti?[4] Śiva Himself, with his five mouths, has failed to describe it. When death approaches the dweller at Benares who longs for liberation, to him Śambhu[5] Himself appears, and utters in His ear the great Mantra called Tāraka-Brahma in the form in which it was given by his Guru, and thus grants him the supreme liberation of Nirvāṇa. Oh, Jaimini Brāhmaṇa and Ṛṣi! it is that great Śakti who gives the liberation of Nirvāṇa, for She alone is the bīja[6] of all Mantras. Oh, high-souled man, all Vedas have described that Guru of liberation as the Devatā who resides in all Mantras. In the city of Benares, Maheśvara, desirous of granting liberation to all creatures, even to such as hares, insects, and the like, who have received no initiation, Himself utters in their ears at the time of death the name Durgā, the great Tāraka-Brahma Mantra."[7]

Again, in the chapter on Creation in the same Śāstra, it has been said: "High-souled man! in this manner Bhagavān Brahmā created the whole world, and Prakṛti Devī, appearing through part of Herself as Sāvitrī, whom the twice-born worship at three

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[1] See *Introduction to Tantra Śastra.* [2] Karma.
[3] The Devī whose seat is in the Mūlādhāra. [4] Primal Śakti.
[5] Śiva. [6] Seed or seed mantra.
[7] Mahābhāgavata Discourse between Vyāsa and Jaimini.

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sandhyās,[1] received Him as Her husband. Similarly the Devī incarnated Herself in part as Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, and in Her play received Viṣṇu, the maintainer of the three worlds, as Her husband."

Over and above this there are descriptions of Her innumerable manifestations[2] in the form of the Mātṛkā varṇas.[3] To these aspects we shall refer in their proper place. In fact, there is no difference in substance between the different states, Vācya and Vācaka, of Saccidānandamayī.[4] As clouds are the compact state of water, so the aspect with attributes of the Vācaka Śakti is but the compact state of the attributeless Vācya Śakti. As clouds moved by the wind liquefy and pour rain, so, moved by the love of devotees, the Deva with form and attributes gratifies them by manifesting to their view that aspect of Hers without attributes which pervades the universe. Sādhana and Siddhi are the necessary process to secure such gratification. For this reason we find in Śāstra that whenever She has out of her extreme favour to a devotee fully manifested Herself, She has, despite of Her being formless, shown the world-form[5] as Her own form. Had the Vācaka Śakti been separate from the Vācya Śakti, how were it possible for the unlimited Śakti extending throughout the universe to appear in that limited form? How could the womb of a limited form hold this universe? And so, oh, devotee, I say the cloud is but a condensed mass of particles of water. Open your heart, cry "Oh, Mother!" fan it with the wind of devotion,[6] and then you will see that a copious incessant downpour will deluge the three worlds. And then, not only ourselves, but the whole dualistic world will enter and sink in the unfathomable womb of the one and only existence.[7] When the Śakti with attributes resident in the Mantra is, by dint of the Sādhana of the Sādhaka, awakened, She will open the gate of the monistic truth, when it will become possible to see the true nature and essence[7] of this universe. Just as in order

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[1] Morning, noon, and evening. [2] Vibhuṭi.
[3] Letters of the alphabet.
[4] She whose substance is existence, consciousness, and bliss: the definition of Brahman. [5] Viśvarūpa. [6] Bhakti. [7] Tattva.

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to obtain a knowledge of the magic art of acting the actors and actresses must themselves play their parts, so unless the Actor and Actress in the play of this world themselves graciously show us their art, none can give a true perception of what is Brahma-vidya.[1] But the matter is different for those who, appearing themselves in the character of actors and actresses, make a play of that play, who in reading dramas themselves become the dramatis personæ, and who the moment they close their eyes cause the universe with attributes to vanish, and see the attributeless Brahman.[2] For they are themselves both exhibitors and spectators, both actors and audience. They can change their character ten times in an hour, and themselves enjoy the sight of it. They can do what they like. We have nothing to say to it. Nevertheless, whatever others may say, they themselves know that they are not one whit better than what they were before, but have merely assumed a part. So much about the playing of parts; the seeing of the real play is a different matter. But the thirst of the heart of those who hope that He will play, and they will see; that He will dance, and they will be the cause of His dancing; that He will show His real aspect and they will enjoy it to their hearts' content, cannot be satisfied by the sight of this worthless play. Their solemn resolve is that so long as new and charming clouds do not appear in the sky, they would rather cry with plaintive hearts and parched throats incessantly, like a cātaka,[3] in this life, tormented by the three kinds of sorrow,[4] than, being drawn by the false attraction of the mirage, rush towards it like foolish deer, and be untimely consumed with the fire of a burning thirst. Sooner or later a day must come in the year of human life when the eye will be soothed and the heart refreshed by the blissful world-filling beauty of the soothing shining cloud, and the thirst of the heart will be satiated for life by the shower of Her gracious glances full of nectar. For this reason the devotee depends on Her

[1] Knowledge of Brahman.

[2] A remark directed against the Brahmo sect, who are here described as thinking that they can do without Sādhana, and by simply closing their eyes can see the Nirguṇa Brahman.

[3] A bird which is said to live only on rain.

[4] *Vide ante.*

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alone, is all submission to Her, never begs at the door of others, and says: "Oh, Mother, I know that Thy true aspect is Brahma-kaivalya,[1] that Thou art without attribute, and attainable by true knowledge alone. I know that Thou art also full of kindness for Thy devotee. I know that Thou art our Lady,[2] and that the universe is Thy form. I know that Thy substance is existence, consciousness, and bliss, and that Thou in various forms grantest the desires of Sādhakas. I know that Thou holdest the three worlds in play. I know, oh, Mother, that Thou art the ordainer of all ordainers. But still I know that for the man who is helpless, destitute, and woebegone, who seeks a shelter from danger, and who has no means of fulfilling his desire, Thou art the sole amulet, Mantra, and healing balm. It is in order that She may grant this prayer of the Sādhaka and to prove the truth of this faith that She who is the Vācya Śakti, whose substance is eternal consciousness, assumes playful forms as Vācaka Śakti. Dwelling as Daughter in such a form the Mother of the world said to Her Father, Himālaya: 'None can comprehend my subtle[3] form without first having duly meditated[4] on my gross[5] form. The sight of this subtle form releases Jīva from the bonds of Samsāra, and gives him Nirvāṇa Samādhi.[6] For this reason a Sādhaka who desires liberation must first seek refuge in my gross forms, and then, having by Kriyāyoga duly worshipped these forms slowly and step by step, think of My supreme, unwasting, subtle form."

The Sādhaka will from this realize that it is only after full worship of Her in Her aspects with form that he has the right to think little by little, of Her subtle aspect. Now where is that subtle aspect, and where stand you and I ?

As in Gāyatrī, so in every Mantra, the Vācya Śakti is without attribute, and the Vācaka Śakti is with attribute, for the latter is the object of worship and the former the object which is to be attained. The Vācaka Śakti must be used as a means and support in order that the Vācya Śakti may be attained.

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[1] The supreme liberation.
[2] Īśvarī, feminine of Īśvara, the "personal" Deity.
[3] Sūkṣma. [4] Dhyāna. [5] Sthūla. [6] Ecstasy of liberation.

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So long as I must worship with this, my mind and heart preserving the distinction that I am the worshipper and She is the worshipped, so long there is no other alternative than to worship that aspect of Her which has both form and attributes. But on the day that my mind and heart sink in the womb of Prakṛti,[1] the twenty-four tattvas[2] will disappear in Herself, all egoism will be destroyed, and I shall lose myself in that state beyond all speech and thought, in which "neither you nor I exist". On that day where am I or who is mine? Your existence depends on mine, so that if I cease to exist where, then are you ? And even if "you" do exist there will be no "I" to discover "you". Only so long as a river does not fall and lose itself in the sea does the distinction between river and sea exist. But when the river mingles with the sea the former ceases to exist; and so does the sea to the river, which is lost in it, though it exists for all the world besides. The individuality of the river ceasing to exist, it can no longer say what it has become owing to the loss of its self. There is then no means of either separating the "self" of the river, nor can the river separate itself. For this reason I say that when I cease to exist She, too, notwithstanding Her existence, ceases to exist so far as I am concerned, for with the destruction of my individuality Her individuality in its relationship to me has been destroyed. Now tell me, O Sādhaka! whom shall you worship when sinking in the attributeless aspect of the Self. This state is not worship, but the ultimate fruit of it called Nirvāṇa or Brahmakaivalya. In this state the worshipper becomes one with the worshipped. There remains neither worshipper nor worshipped, but only She. If you consider this as also suitable for worship, I know not where in the domain of the Lady with dishevelled hair[3] you can get liberation. However that may be, the question is one which concerns only those who have attained that state. We say to you, Jīva, that so long as that state of a Jīva lasts, no other means are available to you but worship. So

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[1] See *Introduction to Tantra Śastra.*

[2] Of Sāṅkhya—*viz.*, Prakṛti, Mahat, Ahaṅkāra, Manas, Indriyas, Tanmātras, Mahābhūtas.

[3] Devī as Kālī and other appearances (Mūrti) is so represented.

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long as you must worship you must, in order to maintain that worship as such, continue to worship a Deity which possesses form. Do not be afraid. Neither you nor I will have to clutch indiscriminately at anything or everything.

She who created Jīva knew aforehand the pangs of the Jīva's heart, and because She must be attained the Daughter of the Mountain has surrendered Herself to various forms. Because of this we on earth may dare to stretch our hands towards heaven to seize Her. Although, whether on earth, in heaven, or in the nether world, She is one without a second, She has yet assumed various forms as Mother of the dualistic world. It is the sight of this grand play of Brahmamayī, which has led Śāstra to say in the Kulārṇava Tantra:[1]

"Brahman, who is all consciousness, without body or part, and beyond the power of speech and mind, builds forms for Himself for the benefit of Sādhakas."

In the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, Sadāśiva says to the Devī: "Hear why Thou art worshipped, and why Thy Sādhana leads Jīva to Brahma-Sāyujya?[2] Thou art the supreme Prakṛti of the Supreme Soul. O Śivē![3] the whole world is born of Thee. Hence Thou art its Mother. O Lady! everything in this world, be it great or small, moving or unmoving, has been created by Thee, and exists under Thy control. Thou art the Mūlaprakṛti[4] of all Vidyās,[5] and the origin of even Us;[6] Thou knowest the Tattva[7] of the entire universe, yet none knows Thy true aspect. Thou art Kālī, Tārā, Durgā, Ṣoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, and Dhūmāvatī. Thou art Bagalā, Bhairavī, and Cinnamastā. Thou art Annapūrṇa[8] and the Devī of speech.[9] Thou art Mahālakṣmī, who dwells in a lotus. Thou dost embody all Śaktis. In Thee are all Devas. Thou art subtle as well as gross, manifested as well as unmanifested. Formless, Thou dost possess also forms.

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[1] Chap. vi.
[2] Union with Brahman.
[3] The Devī.
[4] The root or primal Prakṛti.
[5] Śaktis.
[6] That is, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, and other Devas.
[7] Truth, Principle, Nature, Essence.
[8] Various forms of the Devī, including the Daśamahāvidyā.
[9] Sarasvatī.

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Who can know Thy true aspect? For the success of worshippers, the welfare of the whole world, and the destruction of the Dānavas,[1] Thou assumeth all kinds of bodies. Thou art four-armed, two-armed, six-armed, and eight-armed. For the preservation of the universe Thou holdeth all kinds of arms and weapons. Mantra, Yantra,[2] and other modes of Sādhana, as well as the three forms of worship, Pasu, Vīra, and Divya,[3] are all described in Tantra in accordance with these different aspects of Thine." The same Tantra says: "Thou dost embody all Śaktis; Thou art the supreme Ādyāśakti.[4] Our Śaktis[5] as Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe, are derived from Thy Śakti. Thy eternal forms are of varied colour and shape, and adored by means of various forms of Sādhana. Who can describe all these? It is by the grace of a drop of Thy mercy that it has been given to Me to describe in Kulatantra Āgama and other Śāstras the mode of Sādhana and worship of those forms of Thine."

From these Śāstrik references it appears that the Daughter of the Mountain, knowing the incapacity of Jīva to conceive any idea of Her subtle nature,[6] incarnated Herself in various forms for Sādhana and Siddhi, the welfare of the three worlds, and for the relief of earth from the burden of its sins.[7] This is the firm faith of those who proceed along the path of Sādhana under the control and protection of Śāstra. Different is the opinion of those who hurry along the path of selfishness, keeping Śāstra under their control. None can object to another preaching his own individual opinions. But those who hide themselves under the cloak of Śāstra, and in an unnatural way kill or wound it, stabbing its heart with wrong meanings and perverted interpretations, pouring into it the poison of selfishness, proclaiming to the world that they are doctoring the Śāstra from the poisonous bag, full of sharp weapons of selfishness belonging to modern social reformers, founders of religion, critics, and murdering

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[1] Demons.
[2] The worshipped diagram.
[3] The three Bhāvas.
[4] Primal Śakti.
[5] That is, the powers of Brahmā and others.
[6] Tattva: existence or reality.
[7] Bhūbhāra.

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charlatans, must be exposed in order to show with what excellent remedies they trumpet their doctoring of the religious world. We must also see whether the very wasted, contracted, and slumbering state of religion which they have brought about in the present time by virtue of their treatment is merely a sleep of rest for religion, or its eternal sleep in death. In this section we shall disclose to Sādhakas that new treatment of Sādhana-dharma by these doctors, which consists of hitting its head with the Brahma-weapon:[1]

Cinmayasyāprameyasya niṣkalasyāśarīriṇaḥ
Sādhakānām hitārthāya brāhmaṇo rūpakalpanā

That is to say, Brahman who is all consciousness, without body or parts and beyond the reach of speech and mind,[2] builds forms for the benefit of Sādhakas.

We have given before the interpretation of this verse, based on the authority of Śāstra. But the above mentioned doctors are opposed to this interpretation. They say that worshippers have themselves given imaginary forms to Brahman for their own purposes, although, as a matter of fact, Brahman has no form. If this be true, then Sādhakas have not only given imaginary forms to Brahman, but their alleged purposes and benefit must be imaginary. If Brahman has really no form, how can we believe that a true purpose can be served by attributing false and imaginary forms to Him? You may say that contemplation of form merely produces concentration of mind, and that, by His grace, gives siddhi. Here we ask, Does it not make one feel inclined to laugh when one thinks of something as existing which one knows to be non-existing? It is neither contemplation nor concentration, but the play of a child with Brahman. A girl knows well enough that a doll can never be a living thing. She is not also ignorant of the fact that she is a little un-married maiden. Still when she plays she shows great concern for her doll-son, pretends that it is crying, feigns to give it milk, takes it on her lap, caresses it, and so satisfies her own mind. The

[1] A pun: the Brahma-weapon is a very dangerous one. Here it refers to the modern eclectic sect, called the Brahma Samaj.

[2] Aprameya.

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attribution of false forms to Brahman is exactly similar. I know that the attributeless Brahman has no pleasure, displeasure, virtue, vice, attraction, attachment, pity, generosity, no love, affection, dual relation, or even body. Is it not then absolutely useless for me to meditate upon imaginary forms of that attributeless reposeful Brahman who has no form and to worship Him to gain His favour? Who will deny that they are madmen who believe that during the eternal flow of worldly events from time immemorial Āryan worshippers have been simply wasting their energies in such a useless task ?

Secondly, if forms are imagined in order with their help to acquire concentration of mind, why abandon such forms as are naturally beautiful and calculated at the very first glance to captivate the mind; and why make the restless mind still more restless by the imagination of all kinds of unnatural and various forms for Devas and Devīs. There is no objection to such an argument in the case of those who have imagined such unnatural forms. But such an idea is dangerous to those whose success depends on the dictates of Śāstra. Whilst worshipping, I am independent, but at the time of receiving the fruits of worship I am dependent on Śāstra! It is very difficult to enter into this monstrous mystery.

Does Siddhi obey my command? Is it not the height of impudence or the raving of a madman to suppose that Siddhi will appear and move in the way I shall order it, and follow upon whatever form I shall contemplate? Knowing that this vanity of free thought in Śāstra must one day be shattered, Bhagavān, in the discourse between Śrī Bhagavān and Uddhava in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata,[1] says:

"The Sādhaka who disobeys Śāstrik ordinances and does sādhana according to his will, not only fails to achieve siddhi, but also goes to Hell." His licence deprives him of siddhi, and the great sin of disobedience to Śāstra leads him to Hell.

Will you and I to-day give imaginary forms to Him whose will has created the infinite of the Brahmāṇḍa? It is, indeed,

[1] Chap. xii.

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creditable to you that you, being a man, have been able to believe it. I ask, What is your authority for this imagination of forms? You will reply that Śāstra had said: "Sādhakānāmhitārthāya, brahmaṇorūpakalpanā."[1] I find nothing to object to in what Śāstra has said, but the danger lies in the manner in which it is understood.

[1] *Vide ante;* the proper translation is, "For the good of sādhakas Brahman builds forms," but, as pointed out later, the author's opponents translate the sentence differently.

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CHAPTER V

COMMANDS OF ŚĀSTRA

ŚĀSTRA, which sees Brahman as He really is, has said that Brahman Himself builds forms for Himself for the benefit of Sādhakas. But you take the Śāstra to mean that worshippers have given imaginary forms to Brahman. The word Sādhakānām is formed by adding the sixth case-ending to the word Sādhaka. This sixth case, according to you, indicates the nominative, and you take the word Rūpakalpanā with Sādhakānām. Again, the word Brāhmaṇah which is formed by adding the sixth case-ending to the word Brahman is supposed by you to have its sixth case in the genitive sense. You thus explain the whole thing as "forms have been imagined by Sādhakas in relation to Brahman." But this is not its right explanation. It is the word Sādhakānām, which has its sixth case in the genitive sense, and should be read with the word hitārthāya. Again, the word Brāhmaṇah has its sixth case in the nominative sense, and should be read with rūpakalpanā. Thus the whole verse comes to mean "forms have been built by Brahman for the benefit of Sādhakas." Although both sides may be equally liable to mistake, still the view which I have taken harmonizes with the context of the Śāstrik saying. For the above verse appears in the Kulārṇava Tantra in connection with the worship of Devas possessing forms. First Devī says:

"I now desire to hear of the character of worship, so tell me the mode of worship in the purification of Kula articles, etc." In answer to this question Bhagavān Śiva, the Creator of all things, explains in the chapter on Worship, the necessity or otherwise of invoking Devās, and establishes the fact of the possession of form to be the very foundation of invocation. It is in this connection that the verse appears whilst making provision for the worship of embodied Deities. To say that it is impossible

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that they should have aspects with form is not merely irrelevant, but disproves the very thing which it is sought to prove. This instance affords no opportunity for the service of selfish ends by giving a fallacious interpretation of the Sanskrit verse.

Secondly, there are ample grounds for the support of my view, namely, (1) If Sādhakas give, according to their desire, imaginary forms to Brahman, why should the eternal Śāstra accept such as evidence? (2) If Sādhakas may create forms according to their own sweet will, it would be hard to guess the number which have been already created by innumerable Sādhakas of different casts of mind, and the countless forms which will also in the future be created. Besides, if worship of all these forms gives siddhi, why has not Śāstra separately provided in the case of them the mode of worship, consisting of Dhyāna,[1] Mantra, etc? (3) If I am independent in the matter of the imagination of forms, why should not also the mode of worship be guided by my own free-will? (4) If I imagine a form according to my own desire, what is there to oblige Īśvara to appear in that form? (5) If I can build forms, why cannot I build Mantras as well? (6) If Mantra Śakti[2] is guided by my Śakti, why, instead of expending it on Mantra, do I not worship in some other way? (7) Why should one accept a guru in respect of a worship which is to be performed by me according to my imagination? (8) What śakti[3] is there in Jīva himself whereby he may obtain supersensual, superhuman siddhi without the help of Śāstra? (9) When have I seen, or heard, or been convinced by argument of such siddhi having been obtained by any person so that I may believe it? (10) Who will be responsible if in trying to obtain such siddhi I happen to fall? (11) Who knows in what time such siddhi may be attained? (12) If siddhi may be attained according to one's own desire, what is the necessity of worshipping Gāyatrī, whose substance is mantra, as said in Śāstra?

These and other grounds are as favourable to my view as they are unfavourable to yours. How will you dare to say that

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[1] Meditation. [2] Potency of mantra. [3] Power.

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Sādhakas imagine forms without first answering fully these questions I have put against you ?

When dealing with Her dhyāna, the Gāyatrī Tantra has said: "She has adopted playful bodies according to Her own desire." Again, in Bhagavadgītā,[1] Bhagavān Himself (whose form is in question here), has said:

"Though unborn, the imperishable Self, and also the Lord of all beings, brooding over Nature, which is Mine own, yet I am born through My own Power.

"Whenever there is decay of righteousness, O Bhārata! and there is exaltation of unrighteousness then I Myself come forth.

"For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil doers, for the sake of firmly establishing righteousness I am born from age to age.

"Any devotee who seeketh to worship with faith any such aspect, I verily bestow the unswerving faith of that man."[2]

The Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa in Devīmāhātmya[3] says: "Eternal is She whose appearance[4] is the universe which She pervades, yet hear from me of Her birth in various forms. Wherever She appears to do the work of Devas She is known in the three worlds to be born (although She is in reality free from birth and death)."

The same book in the hymn in praise of the Devī says: "Mother, Thou hast by dividing Thyself into many forms, achieved the destruction of great Asuras,[5] the enemies of Dharma. By whom else can this be done ?"

The following discourse between Himālaya and Pārvati appears in Bhagavatī Gītā in Mahābhāgavata:

The Devī said: "O father, Lord of Mountains, of my own free-will have I divided My own form for the purpose of creation into the dual aspects of male and female. Of these, Śiva is the supreme Puruṣa, and Śivé the supreme Śakti.[6] Great King,

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[1] Chap. iv, verses 6, 7, 8; and chap. vii. verse 21.

[2] For convenience, reference is made to a published translation. This and the other extracts from the Bhagavadgītā are from Mrs. Besant's translation, with the Sanskrit text.

[3] Chap. i. [4] Mūrti. [5] Demons.

[6] That is, the supreme "male" and "female" principles.

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Yogīs who discern the truth[1] speak of Me as Brahmatattva, with its two aspects of Śiva and Śakti.[2] As Brahmā I create this universe of moving and non-moving things,[3] and as Mahārudra I, of My own will, destroy it at the time of dissolution.[4] High-souled Himālaya, it is I, too, who, for the putting down of evil-doers, maintain as Viṣṇu, the supreme Puruṣa, this entire created universe. High-souled Himālaya, it is I, too, who, by repeated incarnations on earth as Rāma and others, destroy Dānavas and save this world. Father! of all these eternal and occassional forms of Mine, the greatest is that consisting of Śakti, for it is certain that without Śakti, the spirit in the form of Puruṣa has no power of action. Great King, know all such forms of Mine as have been above mentioned, as well as my forms of daughter and the like visible to you, to be My gross forms. I have already told you what My subtle form is. Great Mountain, none can apprehend My subtle form, the sight of which gives nirvāṇa kaivalya to Jīva, without first meditating on My gross form. For this reason a Sādhaka who desires liberation must first seek refuge with My gross forms, and after having fully and duly by Kriyāyoga[5] worshipped these forms slowly and little by little meditate on my unwasting, subtle, and supreme form."

Himālaya then said: "Mother Maheśvarī, many are Thy gross forms. Which of these should Jīva seek refuge with in order easily to attain to liberation ? As thou wouldst favour me, Mahādevī, tell me this."

The Devī replied: "This universe consists of my gross forms. Of all these, the Devī form deserves the highest worship, and soon grants liberation. High-souled Himālaya, that Devī form is also manifold. Of these, the Mahāvidyas grant liberation speedily. Great King, hear their names from me: Mahākālī, Tārā, Ṣoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Bagalā, Chinnamastā, Mahātripurasundarī,[6] Dhūmāvatī, Mātaṅgī.[7] All these insure liberation. If Jīva will give his devotion to these forms liberation

[1] Tattva. [2] See ante. [3] That is, the organic and inorganic world.
[4] Pralaya. [5] Yoga of action.
[6] Kamalā.
[7] The ten forms which the Devī assumed prior to Dakṣayajña (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

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is of a certainty soon within his reach. Father, by means of Kriyāyoga seek the protection of any of these forms. Directing your mind towards Me alone you will of a surety possess Me. O Mountain, high-souled people who have found Me are never reborn. For them there is no birth in this life transient and full of sorrows. King! to the devoted yogī who ever remembers me with undistracted devotion I grant liberation. If one but once remembers Me with devotion at the time of death he is nevermore overcome with the mass of worldly sorrows. High-souled man! to him who worships Me with devotion and singleness of heart I grant eternal liberation. Seek My protection in My aspect as Śakti. It is that which surely procures liberation, and liberation will be attained by you. Great King! even those who worship other Devatās with respect and devotion really worship Me alone, for I am in all and the giver of reward in every sacrifice. (That is, since I am in everything there is, leaving aside Devatās, nothing in this world which, in a spiritual sense, is separate from me. And as to Devatās, whoever, of them may be worshipped, they are merely manifestations of My own greatness; so that, whatever sacrifice may be performed, it is I who, in the form of the Devatā worshipped therein, grant in return for such worship its reward. But, great King! liberation can never be obtained by those who are devoted to these Devatās alone (that is to say, who in their devotion to the Devatās whom they worship are indifferent, disrespectful, or wanting in devotion to other Devatās, considering the latter to be different from the former). Therefore with thy mind under control, seek shelter with Me for the loosening of the bonds of physical existence, and without a doubt you shall find Me."

In the Niruttara Tantra it has been said: "Devī, Śiva and Śakti are each divided according as they are with or without attribute. The supreme attributeless Brahmasanātanī[1] is full of lustre, as is also the supreme attributeless Puruṣa,[2] who shines like a great blue jewel. But that attributeless shining Dakṣiṇākālikā[3] is far removed from all prapañcas[4] (that is to say, Her

[1] Śakti. [2] Śiva. [3] See ante.

[4] Objects, consisting of the combination of the five tattvas: 'earth,' "water," "fire," "air," and "ether".

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attributeless aspect, being imperceivable by physical beings formed by Māyā, lies at a great distance, for it is beyond the reach of Māyā, and therefore, so far as Jīva formed of Māyā is concerned is situate beyond the sea of Māyā).

"In Her attributeless aspect that unbounded Sarasvatī is of unmeasurable power, and the Mūlaprakṛti of the fifteen phases of Śakti, such as Kalī, Kapālinī, Kulva, and others. Again, in Her state with attributes, when She gives birth to the three Devas—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara—in the great ocean of the original cause,[1] Her womb; it is She who gives birth to Mahākāla, the first-born. It is She who, assuming a female form, gives birth to the entire universe, consisting of moving and unmoving things. It is She who, as Viṣṇumāyā and Mahālakṣmī, has spread Her charm over this entire universe. That Ādyāśakti Dakṣiṇākālī is Siddhavidyā, and, as such, She is Mūlaprakṛti and Puruṣa. Prakṛti and Puruṣa are inseparably connected. One does not exist independent of the other. United with Śakti, Puruṣa attains Śivahood; and united with Śiva, Prakṛti attains Śaktihood. It is the inseparable connection consisting of this union which is Parabṛahmatattva. It is in this union that they should be contemplated. It is of this union that Śiva Mantra consists. In Dhyānayoga[2] alone should japa be made of this union. The Mantra consisting of this union of theirs is the Mahāmantra, and gives both enjoyment[3] and liberation.[4] He who desires enjoyment attains the four abodes, Sālokya and others,[5] and he who desires liberation is absorbed in nirvāṇakaivalya. Kālī, unbounded Sarasvatī, is the great desire-gratifying tree[6] of those who long for the fourfold fruit of dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa,[7] for She is the sole source of enjoyment and liberation even for Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara. (That is to say, imperfect Jīvas alone, completely under the influence of Māyā, seek from such a tree that fruit which is according to their individual desire. But the peculiarity of this tree is that even those who are the guardians and controllers of Māyā, and who are perfect Īśvaras, have

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[1] Kāraṇa. [2] Yoga by meditation. [3] Bhoga.
[4] Mokṣa. [5] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.* [6] Kalpataru.
[7] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

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to depend upon it for their individual enjoyment and liberation.) A Sādhaka should be initiated by his Guru, and by virtue of his grace worship Kālī, that great tree gratifying the desires of Mahākāla, who embodies all Mantras and Tantras."

The following are Sadāśiva's words to Devī in the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra:[1] "Mahākāla, the destroyer of the universe, is but another aspect of Thyself. At the time of the great dissolution Kāla will swallow the entire universe. Because of this gathering unto death and destruction of all created things, He is called Mahākāla and you Kālī. The three worlds sing of Thee as the Primal One,[2] because at the time of giving birth Thou didst give birth to even Mahakāla, the first Puruṣa; and as Kālī, because at the time of destruction Thou dost gather into Thyself even Mahākāla, the Destroyer of all. Then Thou alone, in Thy formless aspect, unknowable and beyond speech and mind dost exist. Thou art formless, though possessing form (that is to say, Thou art not bound to any particular form, as a Jīva is who possesses form), for by means of Māyā Thou dost assume innumerable forms according to Thy desire. Thou Thyself art without beginning, and yet art the begginning of all (that is to say, there is none prior to Thee). It is Thou who createth, preserveth, and destroyeth the world."

On Formlessness and Form

Sādhaka, what do you understand from these statements of Śāstra ? Are the forms of Brahman imagined by Sādhakas or built by Himself ? What clearer evidence than this do you expect from Śāstra? This is why I said that there can be no objection to what Śāstra has said. It is the fault of our intelligence which does all the mischief. Śāstra has repeatedly said that He took forms according to His own desire. But you and I are ashamed of believing this, because on first entering school it dawned on us that "Īśvara is formless and consciousness itself." Every dawn has its setting, but in the "Dawn of Sense"[3] there is

[1] Chap. iv. [2] Ādyā.

[3] Bodhodya, the title of a work for children by the late Pandit Īśvara Chandra Vidyāsāgara. The following passages are a satirical play on the word Īśvara as denoting the Pandit and also the name of God.

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neither dawning nor setting. From beginning to end, in both purpose and effect, it is only full of accounts of Īśvara's own self. Many people are therefore troubled with the thought that Śāstra is Īśvara's[1] word, and "the Dawn of Sense" is also Īśvara's[2] word, so they know not which to disregard at the risk of going to Hell. The Īśvara of the nineteenth century is truly an extraordinary and wonderful thing: for though, according to Śāstra, Brahman[3] and Īśvara are in one sense one and the same, yet in another sense they are not so. Brahman is without, whilst Īśvara is with, attributes. Brahman is inactive, while Īśvara creates, preserves, and destroys. But in the various little religious[4] of the nineteenth century Brahman and Īśvara have come to mean one and the same thing. Such a golden cup of stone was never seen before.[5] This also, indeed, is part of Īśvara's sport! However that may be, He whom the Śāstra names Īśvara can never be formless, for His function is aiśvarya, or lordship over the universe. He who has this self-consciousness of lordship cannot be without attribute, and it is impossible to be formless without being attributeless. Again, self-consciousness is a particular state of mind. He who has mind has surely body, and it is mere tautology to say that He whose body is eternally established possesses form. To call Īśvara the Lord of the universe, devoid of form, whether done under the authority of Śāstra or reason, is as though one said that the ocean was devoid of water. An Īśvara with form is necessary for the creation of a universe with form. Had He been devoid of form, His creation also would have been devoid of it.

Such were our dawning ideas as the result of our training under a schoolmaster in boyhood. What we have subsequently understood of ourselves, and which science is supposed to confirm, is that an Īśvara possessing body can never be omniscient; for we suppose that, having a body, He must necessarily be bound

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[1] God. [2] The Pandit.

[3] Brahman as the unknowable Supreme without attributes is contrasted with that aspect of It which manifests Itself in the work of creation, etc., and is adored as the "personal" God (Īśvara).

[4] Upadharma: as if one were to say not creeds but "creedlets".

[5] A Bengali saying for an impossibility.

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by Māyā, and possessed of limited knowledge. Such being our inference, it would be wrong to hold that Yogīs and Ṛṣis, who were free of the bonds of life, were unerring either; for they, too, had bodies. Not to mention Īśvara, the powers of Yogīs, Ṛṣis, Śādhus, and Śādhakas, derived from Siddhi are still daily visible. Even infidels cannot ignore this directly perceptible[1] truth. Believers as we are, how can you and I ignore it ? Is He, then, by whose worship even Jīvas with limited knowledge and under the influence of Māyā become free from the bonds of Māyā, and acquire omniscience—is He not omniscient also ? Is not this a point worthy of thought ? As when the door of a room is opened the air within it is united with the great spaces without, so by the opening of the doors of their minds composed of the three guṇas the individual[2] and the supreme[3] principles unite, and are merged in the Self of the Parabrahman. Is He by whose grace they achieve this unable to keep Himself free of the influence of Māyā because of His having of His own free-will assumed form?

Śāstra[4] says: "How can He be subjected to bondage because of His having taken to Himself a body of his own free-will—He who gratifies by the enjoyment of the pollen of His lotus feet Munis who, by the force of Yoga, have thrown off the ties of all Karma, and are no longer bound whatsoever they may do ?

Bhagavān, then, in spite of His contact with Māyā due to the assumption of māyik forms, is free from the bondage of Māyā. This, of course, is a thing unattainable in the Jīvatattva.[5] But how can we help that ? He is Īśvara for the very reason that such superhuman conditions are possible with Him. His Īśvarahood consists of this superhuman power. Śāstra has therefore said: "Animā, Laghimā, Prāpti, Prākāmya, Mahimā, Īśitva, Vaśitva, and Kāmāvasāyitvā—these are the eight Siddhis of Īśvara."[6]

The Śrīmad Bhāgavata, in the discourse between Bhagavān and Uddhava, says: "Animā is minuteness so fine as to be im-

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[1] Pratyakṣa.
[2] Jīvatattva.
[3] Parabrahmatattva.
[4] Chapter on Rāsa in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata.
[5] World of embodied spirits.
[6] See *post* and following passage.

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perceptible by the senses,[1] Mahimā is greatness. Laghimā is lightness. Prāpti is knowledge of all which the Jīva perceives by His senses, due to the fact that Īśvara is the presiding Devatā of the senses of all living creatures. Prākāmya is the enjoyment of all things heard, seen, etc., Īśitva is the application of Śakti or the spreading of the Śakti of His own māyā over every Jīva in the universe. Vaśitva is freedom from the three guṇas of sattva, rajas, and tamas. Kāmāvasāyitvā is the attainment of whatsoever I desire. Good man! these are My eight natural siddhis."

He is Īśvara or Īśvarī, Bhagavān or Bhagavatī, in whom these eight siddhis eternally exist. Now tell me, O Jīva, are these human powers? Without such powers He becomes a mere Jīva like you or me. If He becomes subject to māyā like you or me, what difference is there between Jīva and Īśvara ?

Though eternally connected with māyā, māyā is yet subject to Him. Though full of māyā,[2] He is above it. It has therefore been said in the Vedānta doctrine:

"Prakṛti, in which the Brahman, who is all consciousness[3] and bliss[4] is reflected and which consists of the three guṇas, sattva, rajas, and tamas, is twofold. Prakṛti consisting of pure sattva guṇa is māyā, and prakṛti consisting of impure[5] sattva guṇa is avidyā. The image of consciousness reflected in māyā is called Īśvara. When reflected in avidya it is called Jīva. As māyā has but one aspect, so Īśvara, the reflection in it, has but one aspect.[6] Avidyā which consists of many guṇas, has many aspects, with the result that Jīva, the reflection in it, has also many aspects. The difference between Jīva and Īśvara is that while Īśvara rules māyā, Jīva is subject to it."

Both are connected with māyā, but whereas māyā is subject to Īśvara, Jīva is subject to māyā. This is the difference between Jīva and Īśvara. It is only because man cannot conceive the superhuman force of Īśvara's Śakti that he wonders how Īśvara

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[1] That is, the power to make oneself as little, as big, as light, as heavy etc., as one will.

[2] Māyāmaya. [3] Cit. [4] Ānanda.

[5] That is, sattva and the other guṇas.

[6] Svarūpa — that is, that which it really is.

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can be almighty and omniscient if he possesses form. Foreseeing such an error, Bhagavān said to Arjuna:[1]

"The foolish disregard Me, when clad in human semblance, ignorant of My supreme nature, the great Lord of being."

In the Bhagavatī Gītā[2] the Mother of the universe[3] gave the same instruction to Himālaya:

"Similarly all other sāttvik, rājasik, and tāmasik dispositions which exist derive from Me and exist in Me under My control. But, Great Mountain! I am not under their control. Great King! Jīvas, charmed by My Māyā, fail to recognize this all-pervading supreme, unwasting, non-dualistic form of Mine. But, Father! only those who with a single mind worship Me with devotion can cross this vast ocean of māyā and enter into that supreme form of Mine."

As we cannot directly see the beauty of the lunar orb unless the moon rays come in contact with the eye, so unless the mind and heart become intoxicated with the worship of Him, His true essence[4] cannot be perceived. For this reason, although Śāstra gives a thousand and one instructions, to persons who have not yet acquired a fitness to receive them, they are but as music to the ears of a deaf man.

The root objection nowadays is that as something without bounds cannot be contained in a receptacle with bounds, as unbounded space cannot be held in a limited room as a lake which measures a yojana[5] cannot contain such a mass of water as can deluge the universe, so the limited body of Īśvara cannot possibly hold the śakti[6] of Īśvara. But here let us say that while illustrations and comparisons may be of value and adornment in history and literature, yet illustrations taken from the things of this world have not always equal application to matters touching superworldly realities. It is the height of folly to proceed to discuss the matter with the notion that only that is true which fits with our illustrations, and that which will not so fit is false. For instance, in worldly matters whoever does a thing, does

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[1] Bhagavad Gītā, chap. ix, verse ii.
[2] Part of the Devī Bhāgavata Purāṇa.
[3] Jagadambā. [4] Tattva. [5] Eight miles. [6] Power.

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it with some object. There is no inclination to action which has not a selfish interest in it. If, however, you apply this rule to the matter[1] of the creation, will you tell me what selfish interest Īśvara served, or will serve, by creating this universe ? Ask all Śāstras and Sub-Śāstras on earth, Veda, Tantra, Purāṇa, Koran, the Bible, etc., and see if you get an answer to this question. Who can say that for a selfish end Īśvara has created this world ? Ask of the greatest and bravest of warriors, "Why has this world been created ? " and he will at once be vanquished and fly from the field. All discussions, disputes, inferencess, and theories of Philosophy[2] are concerned with such questions as to how the world was created, is preserved, and will be destroyed. But directly the question arises as to why the world was created the six systems of darśana (philosophy) become adarśana (sightless).[3] The authors of Yoga, Viśeṣa, Mīmāmsa, Nyāya, and Sāmkhya, the Veda and Vedānta, are all blind to the path whereby an answer may be got to the question, Why does this samsāra exist?" The Sādhaka poet Rāmaprasāda has therefore sorrowfully said: "Six blind men wrote books, and they were called Darśana (philosophies)." When Śāstra does not answer this question I must either be a sceptic or say Īśvara must have some selfish purpose. But to say that He has self-interest is to divide Him. There can be no self without others, nor self-interest without self. As there can be no happiness without sorrow, nor sorrow without happiness, no light without darkness or darkness without light, so there can be no "others' interest" without "self-interest", and no "self-interest" without "others' interest". If Īśvara, then, created for His own selfish interest, there must certainly have been other interests existing before the creation. For there can be no self without another. And if there are others, then Īśvara is not one without a second, and there must be some-one else to dispute His sovereignty (the idea of the Mussalman's Satan comes in imperceptibly here). Secondly, if before Him there was another different from Him, who created that other ? If someone else created that other, then Īśvara is not the creator of all. And

[1] Tattva. [2] Darśanaśāstra.
[3] Darśana means sight. Philosophy is said to be the cause of sight.

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if it be said that Īśvara Himself created him, then in the first place was He such a fool as to Himself create His own enemy? In the second place, had Īśvara any interest in creating him? If He had such interest, who was that other in respect of whom such interest arose,[1] and against whom did Īśvara create him? Proceeding continually in this manner to think of others and others, the world is filled with others only. And if then Īśvara begins His creation He becomes a creator no better than Viśvāmitra.[2] Secondly, if Īśvara created him without self-interest, what was the reason of being self-interested when creating us?

But be His interest served or not, what right has He to throw me on the rack of this samsāra and crush me? You say He is almighty. That He may or may not be; but I am weak, and He is sufficiently mighty to crush me at every step. Is not, according to you, Īśvara just? Now, what sort of justice is it that He should crush me day and night at every step because He is mighty? You will say that I suffer the fruits of my own karma, and that for this He cannot be blamed. Then I reply: "Who created me and gave me this propensity for doing karma ?"[3] It was the work of your Īśvara, and I am unable to understand what sort of mercy this is of your merciful Īśvara to put a thorn into one's eyes, and then to chastise one for crying on that account. Advocates of illustrations tell me now: shall I become a sceptic, or say that Īśvara is extremely partial or selfish ? It is to such a conclusion that your illustration leads. Ask this illustration for once whether the selfish propensity of ourselves has any correspondence in Īśvara, and you will see that it will follow the same path as Veda and Vedānta have followed. Press it hard, and the illustration will say: "In the name of Dharma my name is dṛṣṭānta (illustration). I am the end (anta) of what is visible (dṛṣṭa). I am not even the beginning, not to speak of being the end, of that which I have neither seen nor heard. Illustration is the conclusion of only such things as we perceive by natural

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[1] A play upon the word "Svārtha" (own interest) and "parārtha" (another's interest), in the sense that the first suggests the second.

[2] That is, he would begin creation when the world was already created.

[3] Pravṛtti.

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processes. But we must understand whose is this natural process? The nature of Jīva is to exist only, whilst that of the Mother of the universe is to create, exist, and destroy. How can we, with our nature made to exist only, judge of the nature of her of whom we know neither the beginning nor the end ? Illustration has not the power to move a step in a matter unheard and unseen beyond the scope of intellect."

Puzzled by this problem of the solution of questions by illustrations. Gītānjali[1] sings, with a sorrowful mind, as follows:

Whose sport is this? this Samsāra bound by Māyā from which there is no escape.
Who arranges this dance and clown show? Whom should I blame ?
Who is the author of Yoga, Viśeṣa, Nyāya, Sāṅkhya, Veda, and Vedānta ?[2] Why this Samsāra ?
All are blind to the answer of this question.
The blind put forth their shoulders to lift the blind thereon that they may trample on opponents and wave the banner triumph.
These six systems of philosophy are a fearful sight.
They are mere disputations, like the rumblings of clouds,
Hence difference of opinion is likely to bring death by thunderstroke.
True it is Thy sport is eternal, and Thou playest the instrument of Māyā.
So decked like a clown we all dance. The whole is like a juggler's display.
Bands of ghosts play with dust, blind to the time Thou keepest.
From five ghosts innumerable ghosts are created.
The Samsāra is but the playground of ghosts.
But, O Mother! I ask again, It is Thou who makest the Samsāra dance,
And it dances; but what fruit dost thou reap from its dance,
That Thou should make it dance incessantly ?

[1] A volume of verse by the author.
[2] Veda and systems of philosophy.

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If Thou sayest Thou desirest no fruit, then the dance closes.
Who is it that Thou makest to dance ?
It is Thyself who dances under the enchantment of Thy own Mantra,
Discrimination says all are one; or may be I am different from Thee.
Thyself am I; or I am Thine, according as it is unity or separation.
All are transient. Such is the supreme truth. Why, then, is Jīva in bonds ?
The fire of the Samsāra burns the heart. Why does Jīva suffer so miserably ?
When a madman dances, what interest has he to dance ?
Similarly it is Thy nature to dance. There is neither beginning nor end of the dance Thou dancest.
Unceasing is Thy dance on the lotus of Mahākāla's heart.
That dance makes dance the Samsāra, and all its Jīvas in the womb of Kāla (time).
Whoever Thou mayest be, O Brahmamayī ! thou art the place of birth of the Brahmāṇḍa.
"I," "You," and "All" exist in Thee without whom all are blind.
The joyous dance of the Dancing Lady is in the hearts of all.
When it ceases, then Jīva ceases also.
All this, O Mother ! is surely fruit of Karma. All are subject to Thy will.
Thou art full of desires to create, preserve, and destroy.
It was Thyself who existed before and exists now.
There is nothing of "I" in me.
In Thee all is born and destroyed.
That only which remains is the relation of Mother.
If in Thy aspect of Jīva Thou constantly makest Jīva dance,
Or laugh, or weep, wherein is the harm ? What matters it ?
Thine is the rule. Thyself art the ultimate cause.
This knowledge, too, I possess, but the mind is blind.
So, O Śyāmā ! O Mother ! I say mayest thou destroy Śiva Candra's sorrows.

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For this it was that I said that all things do not equally come within the province of illustrations. If in spite of his having (as you say) no attributes, you impute attributes to the attributeless Īśvara, and call Him Creator, why, because of the absence of attributes are you so unwilling to admit that Īśvara with form has omnipotence ?

Secondly, you are unwilling to admit that a small receptacle can contain a vast number of powers. But how is it that you will admit the existence of these powers where there is no receptacle at all ? Śāstra says: "He takes swiftly even without hands, moves swiftly even without feet, sees even without eyes, and hears even without ears. He knows the universe, but none know Him. It is Him whom Śāstra has called Pradhāna and Ādipuruṣa.[1] The Brahman without body and without hands, feet, eyes, and ears, can yet take, move, see, and hear. Why, then, are you astonished when told that the embodied Brahman, who has hands, feet, eyes, and ears, can take, move, see, and hear. The possibility, then, of applying the illustration that a small receptacle cannot hold a vast number of śaktis is removed to the distance of a hundred yojanas.[2] You will next say that if He can see and hear without eyes or ears, why should He take eyes and ears to Himself? Do you really take the śloka to mean that He has no eyes and ears, and still sees and hears? If this be so you understand it wrongly. Just consider that seeing and hearing are functions of eyes and ears. Where did He who had never eyes and ears learn to see and hear ? Who will believe that there is action without acting ? As a matter of fact, He has neither action nor acting. He who is the sole cause of all causes of "acting" has not to wait for "acting" Himself.

He has no eyes, ears, nor sees, nor hears. He is the embodiment of eternal knowledge, and is all consciousness. Ignorance cannot avail against Him so as to make Him lack the knowledge of anything in the universe. Even without the organs of sense, He is full of that knowledge which you and I acquire only through direct perception by means of the organs of sight, hearing, and so

[1] That is, material and efficient cause.
[2] About 8 or 9 miles.

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forth. He does not lack knowledge because of the absence of sense-organs. He knows all without seeing or hearing. Śāstra has therefore said: "He knows the universe, but none know Him." In fact, it is not the purpose of Śāstra to say that He sees even without eyes. Śāstra means that He has knowledge of all things even without seeing. For what we understand by sight is not possible without eyes. For this reason Śāstra only says at the end, "None know Him," instead of saying at each of the different parts of the śloka: "None hold Him," "None go to Him,' "None see Him," "None hear Him." The sūtra consists only of that part of the śloka which says "None know Him." All other portions are merely explanatory and are required that we may understand it. Śāstra first of all taking a comprehensive view of the various forms of knowledge acquired by direct perception mentions the sense organs through which such perception is had, and then says that the knowledge which we acquire by direct perception through the organs of sense exists eternally in Him despite the absence of such organs. Therefore at the end only it is said: "None know Him." [1] The conclusion is that although He knows everybody, none know Him; or, in other words, He is the vessel of all knowledge, but none are the vessel of His knowledge. All knowledge rests in Him, and has Him as its end. This is what Śāstra means, and not that He sees even without eyes.

Thirdly, you say that eternal Śakti cannot exist in limited forms, by which you wish to say that His Śakti of seeing all things is infinite, but that the eyes of a limited body are small. It does not, however, follow from this that you have no faith in His possessing a body or eyes. On the contrary, your dissatisfaction appears to rest on the ground that the eyes I speak of are very small. You wish to see a body much bigger than that to which I refer; so big that we cannot see the whole of it from head to foot all at once. You are then a more profound believer in Īśvara's body than I am. In fact, whenever Bhagavān (or Bhagavatī) has shown His (or Her) true appearance to a devotee in order to gratify the desire of the believer in His or Her body,

[1] Aphorism, verse.

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whenever a devotee, weeping, has eagerly prayed to see Its true appearance, then Bhagavān, who is ever merciful to devotees, has shown His universal appearance; and knowing that that appearance, boundless and of shining brilliance, is invisible to ordinary eyes, He has first granted Divine vision to the devotee, and then manifested that appearance to Him. The following occurs in the Bhagavad Gītā:

"O Supreme Lord, even as Thou describest Thyself, O best of beings, I desire to see Thy form omnipotent.

"If Thou thinkest that by me It can be seen, O Lord, Lord of Yoga, then show me Thine imperishable Self."

The Blessed Lord said: "Behold, O Pārtha! a Form of Me, a hundredfold, a thousandfold, various in kind, divine, various in colours and shapes.

"Behold the Ādityas, the Vasus, the Rudras, the two Aśvins, and also the Maruts;[1] behold many marvels never seen ere this, O Bhārata."

"Here, to-day behold the whole universe, movable and immovable, existing in My body, O Guḍakeśa. What else desirest thou to see ?

"But verily thou art not able to behold Me with these thine eyes. The Divine eye I give unto thee. Behold My Sovereign Yoga."

Sañjaya said: "Having thus spoken, O King, the great Lord of Yoga, Hari, showed to Pārtha His supreme form as Lord.

"With many mouths and eyes, with many visions of marvel, with many Divine ornaments, with many upraised Divine weapons.

"Wearing Divine necklaces and vestures, anointed with Divine unguents, the God all-marvellous, boundless, with face turned everywhere.

"If the splendour of a thousand suns were to blaze out together in the sky, that might resemble the glory of that Mahatman.[2]

"There Pāṇḍava beheld the whole universe, divided into manifold parts, standing in one in the body of the Deity of Deities.

[1] Vaidik Devatā. [2] Great Spirit.

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"Then he, Dhanañjaya, overwhelmed with astonishment, his hair upstanding, bowed down his head to the Shining One, and with joined palms spake."

Arjuna said:

"Within Thy Form, O God, the Gods, I see
All grades of beings with distinctive marks;
Brahmā, the Lord, upon His lotus-throne,
The Ṛṣis all, and Serpents, the Divine
With mouths, eyes, arms, breasts multitudinous,
I see Thee everywhere, unbounded Form.
Beginning, middle, end, nor source of Thee,
Infinite Lord, infinite Form, I find."[1]

The following passage occurs in the discourse betewen Devī and Himālaya in the Bhagavatī Gīta in Mahā Bhāgavata. Himālaya said:

"Mother, although Thou art eternal (devoid of birth and death), Thou hast graciously taken birth in my house. The cause of this grace must surely be a store of religious merits accumulated in many births in consequence of which I am favoured to see Thee in this appearance of a Brahmamayī daughter. (But for the fruit of austerities and devotions earned in scores of births this could not have been even with a thousand years of prayer. By the sight of this appearance of Thine all the fruit of religious merit has been exhausted. I am thus, O Mother ! destitute and without claim. Formerly you were bound to show mercy to me; but now, O Mother ! I am a mendicant for your mercy). Of Thy grace show unto me now Thy appearance as Maheśvarī. (Viśveśvarī, Thou art the Īśvari of the universe—Viśva. Poor as I am, what can I do for Thee? What is there, O Mother! in my power to do? All that I am capable of is to offer my lasting obeisance to those beauteous lotus-feet of Thine.) I bow to Thee."

Viśveśvarī Devī said: "Father, I grant you divine vision. (With that vision) look at my appearance as Īśvara of all. Destroy all the doubts of your heart, and know Me as holding all Devas in Myself."

[1] Bhagavad Gītā, chap. xi. verses 3-16. I have slightly altered Mrs. Besant's translation in the first three lines of this passage.

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Śrī Mahādeva said to Nārada: "Thus granting the most excellent (knowledge of Brahman) to the King of mountains who made obeisance, Devī then showed him Her divine Maheśvara aspect effulgent with the brilliance of ten million moons; bearing on His head, with its clusters of matted hair, the beautiful crescent moon; holding in His left hand a trident, and with the right bestowing blessings, yet awesome and terrible to see." Himālaya was struck with wonder, and (with a heart fearful and unsatisfied said again:

"Mother, show me another aspect of Thine." Thereupon, O great Muni! the Devī, eternal and of universal form, withdrew that appearance of Hers and showed another.

This next was beautiful as the moon in autumn. The head bore a beautiful crown, and the four hands were adorned with a conch-shell, discus, mace, and lotus.[1] The form was brilliant, with three lustrous eyes, clad with celestial garments, hung with celestial garlands, anointed with celestial perfumes, and its fair lotus feet were adored by great yogis. The King of mountains saw that from all sides of this vast[2] body innumerable arms were extended, and innumerable feet were displayed, and that faces with opened eyes were all over its body. The sight of this supreme excellent appearance, replete with the qualities of Īśvara, filled the Great Mountain with wonder. Prostrating himself at the lotus feet of his daughter Brahmamayī, Himālaya said:

"Mother, the sight of this supreme and excellent appearance of Thine, replete with the qualities of Īśvara, has filled me with wonder. Again I pray Thee show me another aspect of Thine. O Highest Īśvara, for him who possesses Thee none in this world can grieve. He is truly blessed. (There is no one in this world who has not a want of some sort, but O Mother! what want can he have who possesses Thee; whose self is merged in Thy vast Self; whose littleness has by its force compelled Thee to abandon Thy greatness, and to attach Thyself to the heart of Thy devotee; whose force has compelled the Īśvara of all to supplicate the

[1] Śaṅkha, cakra, gadā and padma of Viṣṇu. [2] Virāṭ.

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supplicant, the Kālikā maintainer of the universe entreating the devotee that he may be satisfied; and has even compelled, O Mother! the mother of the three worlds, to incarnate as daughter. A want must exist in relation to something, but, O Mother ! where Thou existeth such a want can never exist. Thou art the Śakti in all things good or bad, lifeless or living, in the world. So I say, O Mother; he who possesses Thee of universal form can, because of Thee, have no want, not merely in this universe alone, but even in untold milllions of universes. People grieve for him alone who is destitute. But who will grieve for him who holds thee? who holdest all things in Thyself ? Sinking in Thy existence Jīva is beyond all want and its satisfaction. Though he be the meanest and poorest of men in the samsāra, he is by Thy grace a King of Kings. None therefore grieve for him. All rather envy him, and being unable to emulate him speak of him as a man thrice blessed. O Mother ! by Thy grace favour me; even after receiving such grace I again seek grace, for how else shall I dare to look at the true appearance of Her whose appearances are numberless ?) Knowing that I shall receive this grace, I say, O merciful Mother ! obeisance to Thy feet for evermore."

After seeing many other forms of his daughter, Himālaya, at the end of the hymn says: "Mother, who is there, Deva or human being, in the three worlds capable of fully describing this universe, which is Thy appearance, or Thy qualities, even by the effort of many ages? (Devī, Thy true aspect is unapproachable by even Brahmā and the other Devas.) What can one of small intelligence like myself say of it ? What I have to say, O Mother! is this: If Thou hast mercy for me, by Thy grace, charm me not by Thy great māyā. I have nothing else to say to Thee. O Mother! Īśvarī of the universe, I bow to Thee."

Oh, thou advocate of formlessness, after witnessing all this vast play full of forms and attributes as described in the Śāstra, do you still grieve at the smallness of His appearance ? Wheresoever you will look you will see innumerable eyes, innumerable feet, innumerable hands, innumerable heads, which even infinite space is unable to contain. What more eternal sports of eternity

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do you wish to see ? Even Arjuna, conqueror of the three worlds, was tormented with fear at the sight of the terrible Kāla aspect of Bhagavān, and, weeping, said:

"Radiant, Thou touchest heaven, rainbow-hued,
With opened mouths and shining vast-orbed eyes,
My inmost self is quaking; having seen,
My strength is withered, Viṣṇu, and my peace.
Like Time's destroying flames: I see Thy teeth,
Upstanding, spread within expanded jaws;
Nought know I anywhere, no shelter find.
Mercy, O God ! refuge of all the worlds."[1]

(Formerly I thought that you were a Deva, now I know that you are Deveśa, Lord of Devas. Formerly I thought that Thy abode was in the universe. Now I know that the universe is in Thee: So I say, O Lord! the conclusions at which I, a Jīva, have arrived are false. Be now pleased with Thy natural graciousness to grant me power to see Thy true aspect.)

Sādhaka, do you still believe that you and I have the courage to look upon that appearance ? Does this enormous power which shatters the Brahmāṇḍa and destroys all the regions bespeak, in your opinion, but a small śakti ? The quantity of water which the sea holds is not small, but the jars which you and I possess are small. The Śaktis and Vibhūtis[2] in the body of Bhagavān are unlimited and eternal, but neither your nor my brain can contain them. The smallness of the quantity of water in our jar makes us, when sitting in our houses, think that the endless sea is small when in truth it is not. In case you should say that a perfect display of Īśvara's Śakti was not proved by the fact that it overpowered the weak human heart of Arjuna, frightened at the prospect of kith and kin, I will cite another example. It is true that Arjuna, in his play as a human being,[3] was already afraid of committing an unrighteous act. That fear was the fear of a Jīva, but He who is above both righteousness and unrighteousness, and is ever feared by Indra, Yama, Candra, and Sūrya, is afraid of nothing. The heart of the almighty

[1] Bhagavad Gītā, chap. xi, verses 24 and 25.
[2] Manifestations.
[3] Arjuna was an incarnation of the Ṛṣi Nara.

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Supreme Puruṣa, higher than the highest, who alone among the Devas is the vanquisher of death, whose name, Parameśvara, is the true epithet of His real self, who after he has destroyed the Brahmāṇḍa[1] at the time of the great dissolution,[2] Himself exists for ever as Pūrṇa Brahman;[3] Mahākāla, unwasting, untouched by time, immortal, is neither weak nor afraid of anything. Yet, notice how He, too, once trembled with fear and was beyond Himself when He could not find a path of escape.

When Mahādeva refused Jagadambā permission to attend Dakṣa's sacrifice,[4] even though She repeatedly besought it, the daughter of Dakṣa,[5] who is eternal perfect Brahman, seeing that Bhagavān was influenced by a husband's vanity,[6] assumed a terrible aspect, with the object of shattering that vanity. Śāstra gives the following account of this in Mahā Bhāgavata. Śrī Mahādeva said:

When thus spoken to by Maheśvara, Satī, the daughter of Dakṣa, with eyes reddened with anger, pondered for a moment. Śaṅkara[7] has obtained me as His wife (by virtue of My own gift) after long prayer and severe austerities;[8] yet to-day He slights and speaks harshly to Me (though in the play of incarnation He is my husband, I shall forsake this proud Mahādeva, as also My father, the arrogant Prajāpati, and in My own play live for some time in My own abode, the region of Kaivalya). Later on, being begged (and entreated in severe sādhana) by this Maheśvara, I shall reappear as Himālaya's daughter, and become Śambhu's wife. Pondering thus in Her mind for a moment, the daughter of Dakṣa opened Her three fearful eyes, and overpowered Śaṅkara with illusion.[9] Śambhu stood still at the sight of the Devī, with Her lips parted in anger and eyes shining like destructive fire. On being thus looked at by the frightened Maheśvara, the Devī suddenly displayed the terrible teeth in Her terrible mouth and laughed aloud. On hearing that frightful sound of laughter,

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[1] The egg of Brahman, or universe. [2] Mahāpralaya.
[3] Perfect or complete Brahman. [4] Yajña.
[5] That is, the Devī (Jagadambā) in Her incarnation as Satī, wife of Śiva.
[6] Thinking himself superior to his wife: as appears from the text a very ancient piece of presumption.
[7] Śiva. [8] Tapasyā. [9] Moha.

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Mahādeva was paralyzed with fright. Opening His three eyes with great effort He saw (but once) the world-terrifying aspect of Jagadambā. When He looked upon Her, Her body immediately lost its golden colour, and took on that of a dark mass of crushed eye-paint.[1] She appeared naked as space, with dishevelled hair, with a lolling tongue, and four arms. She was languorous with desire,[2] terribly furious, bathed in sweat (caused by her anger), and of frightful countenance; garlanded with skulls, bearing on Her head a brilliant crown and a crescent moon, shining like ten million suns. Her voice thundered loudly.

In such a fearful aspect Satī dazzling by the mass of her own brilliant energy,[3] stood before Mahādeva, and uttered loud peals of laughter. Seeing the wonderful appearance of the Devī, Mahādeva lost all self-control, and, bewildered with fright, sought to flee in all directions. Seeing the Lord of Kailāsa thus overcome by fear, the daughter of Dakṣa again uttered peal after peal of dreadful laughter, and, with the object of reassuring Him, shouted: "Fear not! fear not!" Hearing this cry and the fierce peals of laughter, Mahādeva was so bewildered with terror that He frantically rushed again in flight in every direction. Seeing her husband so overcome with fear Parameśvarī was moved to pity, and with a view to restrain Him stood for a moment before Him at each of the ten quarters of the Heaven in the form of the ten Mahāvidyās. In whatever direction He ran with haste He thus saw a fearful form standing before Him. In fright He fled in another direction, only to be again confronted by another such form. After having thus run towards each of the ten quarters of the Heaven He saw that there was none without danger for Him. Then, feeling altogether helpless, He sat down on earth and shut His three eyes, and (a moment later as through an inner fear) he opened them. He saw before Him Śyāmā. Her smiling face was like a full-blown lotus. Her breasts were large. Her eyes wide and terrible, and Her hair dishevelled. She was four-armed, naked as space, shining with the light of ten million suns (although black in colour like a fresh cloud), and stood

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[1] Añjana. [2] Kāmālasakalevarā. [3] Tejas.

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facing the south, the heavenly form of Dakṣiṇā. Seeing Her thus (of a strange form full of an uncommon beauty), Śambhu, as if in great fear, asked: "Who art Thou, Śyāmā?[1] Where has Satī, my beloved, gone ?"

Devī said: "Mahādeva, I am Thy Satī here standing before Thee, and yet Thou dost not recognize Me! Why is Thy mind so confused to-day ? Do I appear to Thee different from Thy Satī ?"

Śiva said: "If Thou really art my beloved Satī, daughter of Dakṣa, why hast Thou become black and fearful ? Who are these forms of terrible aspect standing in all directions around Me? Amongst these which art Thou ? Tell me everything, for these wonderful forms have made Me greatly afraid."

Satī said: "I am the subtle (beyond the reach of speech and mind) Mahāprakṛti who creates and destroys. Owing to the promise I had aforetime given Thee (to bless Thee for Thy tapasyā) I (put my true form under restraint, and) incarnated as a fair girl in Dakṣa's house merely to get Thee as My husband (to charm Thee by becoming Thy wife). I have to-day assumed this fearful aspect for the destruction of father Dakṣa's great yajña. But, O Maheśvara! Thou hast no reason to be afraid of Me (for this fearful aspect is assumed to terrify Dakṣa alone). The ten terrible forms which Thou seest in each of the ten directions are each of them My aspect. Oh, Śambhu! Thou possessest immense wisdom. Be not afraid (but see with Thy eye of wisdom) Thou art My most beloved husband, and I am Thy wife. Seeing Thee so greatly afraid and turning in all directions, I stood before Thee blocking them by these ten forms of Mine."

Śiva said: "Thou art the subtle (beyond the reach of speech and mind) Mūlaprakṛti who creates, preserves, and destroys. It is not possible that one should know Thee who art beyond the reach of speech and mind, so, not knowing Thee through great illusion, I have said unpleasant words to Thee. Pardon me, O Parameśvarī, the offence which I have thus committed. Tell me, O Consort of Śiva with fearful eyes, the names of each of

[1] Black Lady.

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these ten most dreadful forms of Thine standing in each of the ten quarters."

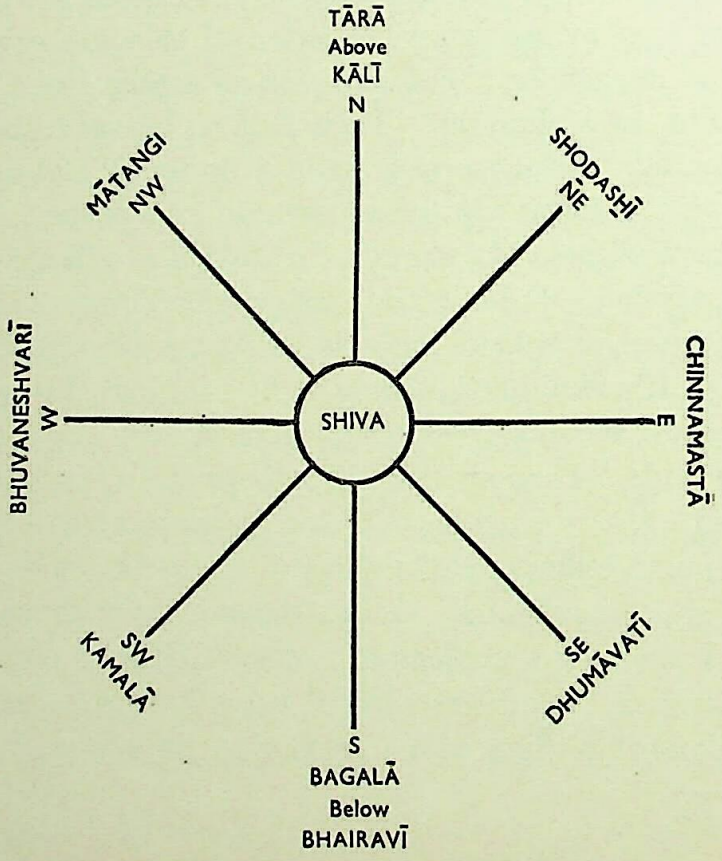
Devī said: "O Mahādeva, these Mahāvidyās are but different aspects of My own Self. Listen! Their names are Kālī, Tārā, Ṣoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Chhinnamastā, Sundarī,[1] Bhagalāmukhī, Dhumāvatī and Mātangī."

Śiva said: "O Devī! who supporteth the universe, if Thou art pleased with me, tell me which of these forms bear these respective names."

Devī said: "The dark-coloured form, with terrible eyes, which Thou dost see before Thee is Kālī. She who is above Thee of Śyāma[2] colour is Mahāvidyā Tārā, the very image of Mahākāla. The lean, destitute and very frightful Devī whom Thou dost see on Thy right side is, O high-souled Mahādeva, Mahāvidyā Chhinnamastā. O Śambhu, the Devī on Thy left

[1] Kamalā or Mahālaksmī.

[2] Grass green, dark blue, blackish.



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side is Bhuvaneśvarī. She who is behind you is Devī Bagalāmukhī, Destructress of foes. She who appears as a widow on the south-east is Devī Mahāvidyā Dhumāvatī, a great Īśvari. The Devī on the south-west is Tripurasundarī.[1] In the north-west is Mātangī, and in the north-east Mahāvidyā Ṣoḍaśī, a great Īśvarī. She who is below Thee is Bhairavī.[2] O Śambhu! be not afraid (at the sight of these ten forms, which are My manifestations, and destroy the fear of existence.) Of My many forms (ninety millions of manifestations)[3] these ten are the best (the most perfect vibhūtis).[4] To such Sādhakas as worship them with devotion they grant the four-fold fruit[5] and all that is desired, O Maheśvara! all such things as Sādhakas desire, such as Māraṇa, Ucchātana, Kṣobana, Mohana, Drāvana, Stambhana[6] Vidveśana, are granted by them. Each of these ten Mahāvidyās is to be kept secret and never revealed. Thou shalt be the ordinancer and interpreter of yantras, mantras, pūjā, homa, puraścaraṇa,[7] stotra,[8] kavaca,[9] practices, rules, and all else concerning them which may be required by Sādhakas. There is none else in the world who can reveal them. The Āgama Śāstra which Thou shalt reveal from Thy mouth will be renowned in the three worlds. O Śaṇkara! Āgama and Veda are my two arms. With them I support the entire universe of moving and unmoving things. The world is maintained by Dharma, as ordained in Tantra and Veda. The fool who disregards them through delusion falls assuredly from the arms which save the three worlds. I am unable to save him who, in disregard of Āgama or Veda, worships Me in a manner different from that ordained in it. This is nothing but the strictest truth. Āgama and Veda are both causes of liberation. But both are difficult to understand and carry out. Knowledge of them is

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[1] Kamalā.

[2] See Daśa-Mahāvidyā-Upāsanā-Rahasya, by Prasanna Kumāra Śāstrī, which illustrates both the figures and yantras. The text also illustrates the positions as shown on the opposite page.

[3] Vibhūtis. [4] See *post.*

[5] Dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa.

[6] "Magical" powers of destruction, driving away, perturbing, enchanting, putting to flight, stopping or paralyzing causing dissension.

[7] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.* [8] Hymn. [9] Amulet.

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hard to attain even by intelligent men. They are eternal and without end. The intelligent will know that the purpose of both the Śāstras is the same, and will practise dharma accordingly. The wise will never, through delusion, consider them to be different. Those who worship these ten Mahāvidyās will act like Vaiṣṇavas, but in rapt concentration will rest their hearts on Me. The Sādhaka will with great care keep secret, and never speak to others of mantra, yantra, kavaca, and other matters which he receives from his guru. If these things are given out siddhi will be unattained and evil will result. A good Sādhaka will therefore conceal them with every care. High-souled Mahādeva, I have now spoken to you of the subject of worship. (Let not the sight of these aspects of Mine strike terror into Thy heart, and make Thee doubt My single-minded love for Thee. I am Thy beloved wife, and Thou, too, art My very beloved husband. To-day I wish only to humble the pride of my father, Prajāpati. So I pray to Thee, O Deva of Devas, that if Thou will not go to the place of sacrifice permit Me so to go. O Deva! it is my intention, with Thy permission, to go and destroy the sacrifice[1] of My father, Prajāpati Dakṣa (and not to frighten Thee)."

Mahādeva said to Nārada: "Hearing these words of Devī, Śambhu stood as one struck with intense fear, and then spoke as follows to the fierce-eyed Kālī."

Śiva said: "Devī, I know that Thou art Parameśvarī, the best, perfect, and supreme Prakṛti. Pardon me the unbecoming words which, overpowered by delusion, I have in forgetfulness used towards Thee. Thou art the primal[2] supreme Vidyā[3] who existeth in all created things. Thou art independent and supreme. Thou art Śakti. Who is there to order Thee to do or to desist from doing anything ? O Śivé[4] if Thou goest to destroy Dakṣa's sacrifice, what power have I to restrain that ? And why should I dare to do so ? O Maheśvarī, pardon me for what (presuming on my position as Thy husband) I have, under

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[1] Because Dakṣa had, to offer him a slight, purposely neglected to invite Śiva, Her husband.

[2] Ādyā. [3] As opposed to Avidyā, though She is both.

[4] The Devī as wife of Śiva.

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the influence of intense delusion, said to Thee. Do Thou as it pleases Thee."[1]

Interpreter of Śāstras, do you consider that that display of power is of no account, at the sight of which even Mahārudra, who causes the great dissolution, was astounded, trembled with fear, and sought to flee ?

When Niśumbha was killed in the battle with the Devī,[2] Śumbha, seeing Brāhmaṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, Maheśvarī, Indrāṇī, Kaumārī, Vārāhī, Nārasiṅghī, Cāmuṇḍī, Kauśikī, and Śivadūtī,[3] fighting with fury, sarcastically addressed Her who rejoices in war, saying:

"O Durgā, proud of the strength of Thy arms, be no longer proud. She who fights with the help of the powers of other Devas has no reason to pride Herself so much as the single-handed conqueror of the three worlds."[4]

She who dwells in all hearts and who ever leans to mercy showed it then without stint. In that field of battle she made Śumbha a reply unheard of even by great yogīs who had attained siddhi and become pure and free of the bonds of life. Jagadambā knew that the King of the Daityas was moved in his actions by an ill-directed intelligence and a naturally wicked nature. Thus, just as a mother cannot forsake her son even if he commits

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[1] Satī then went to the sacrifice (yajna). There, Dakṣa poured invectives on the head of Śiva. Sati's great devotion to Her husband (the Hindu girl prays that she may become like Satī and get a husband like Śiva) could not bear to hear Dakṣa's abuse of Him, and She gave up Her life. Nandi hastened to Kailāsa and told Śiva, who rose in terrible wrath. Fire flashed from His eye and took the fearful form of Bhairava, who went with a host of ghosts and goblins to destroy the yajña. Śiva followed. The yajña was destroyed. Nandi, Śiva's follower cut off Dakṣa's head and threw it into the fire. Śiva then took up the dead body of Satī and went away bearing it on His shoulder. The story continues with the history of the Mahāpīṭhas. Satī reappeared in Her incarnation as daughter of the Mountain-king. The story of the Dakṣa-yajña is one of the most ancient as, it is one of the best known, of all Śiva and Śakti legends.

[2] The brothers Niśumbha and Śumbha were Lords of the Demoniac Dānavas, who had defeated the Devas. The Devī, however, in whose body was the united Śakti of all the Devas, slew first Dhumralocana, Caṇḍa, and Muṇḍa, who had been sent against Her, and then the great Dānava Raktabīja, and finally both Śumbha and Niśumbha (see Caṇḍī of Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa).

[3] The Śaktis of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, and other Śaktis.

[4] That is, Śumbha himself.

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hundreds and thousands of offences against her, but rather with smile and joy takes him on her lap, and then with feigned anger calls him wicked, so the Mother of the universe, looking upon Śumbha with merciful eyes but with such a feigned anger, said: "Wicked one, I alone exist. Who other is there in the world ? Look ! All these manifestations[1] will enter into Me. I will then dispel the doubt which has arisen in your mind at the sight of a number of Devaśaktis." (The mother, as if caressingly, said: "Wicked one, you see these Devaśaktis, and now by a trick wish to know the truth concerning them.") Then in an instant, at the will of Her who is all will Herself, Brāhmaṇī and all other Devīs entered into Brahmamayī's body, and (Śumbha saw that in the battle-field) there was none but Ambikā alone.

Then Devī again said: "I withdraw the many forms in which I (displaying My wealth of manifestation)[1] appeared. I now alone stand in the battle-field. So Śumbha, now desist."

It was as if a boy on seeing many mothers was disconsolate on being unable to recognize his own. The Mother therefore showed him Her real self, and consoled him, saying: "Look, I am thy Mother, so be quiet." But Śumbha was not one to be satisfied with knowing what She was without letting Her know what he was, so putting on the arms and accoutrements of the hero, the hero son of the heroine Mother advanced to heroic struggle. O Mother! he who runs to your arms with his own strength is not a mendicant for your mercy. So the music of war rang out, fiercely shaking heaven, earth, and the nether world, and the evertriumphant Lord of Daityas stood in hand-to-hand conflict, to the sound of victory-giving shouts from this and other worlds.

Śāstra says that when, wounded in the heart by the Devī's spear he fell dead and dropped from the sky to earth, the latter, with its seven principal mountain ranges,[2] seven seas, and seven islands, shook with the unbearable weight of his body. At his death all the regions rejoiced. The whole world regained health. The sky, hitherto overcast with a deep mist, cleared. Inauspicious clouds which had been shooting meteors all around,

[1] Vibhūti, see *post.* [2] Kulācala.

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disappeared. Rivers, the flow of which had long been stayed by the din of the twang of his bow and his thundering shouts, became on his destruction again free, and moved along their channels. The hearts of Devas were filled with immeasurable joy. Gandharvas[1] commenced to sing in sweet tones. Kinnaras, Siddhas, and Sādhyas[2] began to play on musical instruments. Apsaras[3] commenced to dance. Pure air again flowed; the sun at length assumed his natural radiance. Fires could at last burn quietly, and without making the heavens resound with the sound of their burning.

Sādhaka! whose power can compare with the power of him for whose sake the ordained course of Nature was arrested? Is it not a sign of the shortness of our life, intelligence, good fortune, and sādhana that we presume to deem small the power of manifestation[4] of Her whose great māyā charmed even the great charmer Śumbha, ruler over the three worlds? Can you say that the Śakti is small of Her who can make the impossible possible, whose māyā made even Bhagavān Rāmacandra forgetful of himself upon the occasion of the destruction of the hundred-headed Rāvaṇa ?[5] Does not Her play in Her incarnations as a fish, tortoise, and boar, whereby She saved the Vedas, supported the universe, and held the earth on the end of the boar's tusk, bear evidence of a full display of divine Śakti?[6] The sudden appearance, bursting through a crystal pillar, of the strange half-man, half-lion, in order to save Prahlāda, chief among devotees;[7] the display of the Brahmāṇḍa within Her mouth to mother Yaśodā;[8]

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[1] Celestial beings (Devayonis) who, according to the Viṣṇu Purāṇa, were sons of Brahmā, "born imbibing melody"; celestial musicians and choristers who play and sing at the banquets of the Devas; belonging together with the Apsaras—their wives—to Indra's heaven.

[2] Other classes of Devayonis.

[3] Beautiful and voluptuous Devayonis of Indra's Heaven; wives of the Gandharvas; produced at the churning of the ocean.

[4] Vibhūti.

[5] When Rāma was returning from Laṅkā, he met the hundred-headed Rāvaṇa. On seeing him, forgeful that he was Bhagavān, Rāma did not dare to fight.

[6] Various incarnations of Viṣṇu.

[7] The Nṛsimha Avatāra of Viṣṇu.

[8] Yaśodā was wife of Nanda, in whose home Kṛṣṇa was brought up. The infant Kṛṣṇa showed to Yaśodā the universe in His mouth.

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the destruction of Pūṭana by sucking milk from her breasts;[1] the upholding of Mount Goverdhana by a boy of seven;[2] the charming, unknown to the three worlds of Brahmā through one whole year, by the raising of calves, cows, and cowherds by māyā;[3] the humbling of the pride of Kandarpa[4] by the assumption, in playful favour to devotees, of thousands of forms in early youth for the gratification of herdswomen who were maddened with love, and had attained siddhi by the practice of tapas for many ages;[5] the showing of the virāṭ[6] aspect to Akrūra[7] in the waters of the Yamunā[8]—all these are doubtless not perfect manifestations so far as the perfect Brahman is concerned, yet, O man, I ask you, can you imagine even in dream anything greater than these ? The world of Jīvas could (were it to desire it) obtain even greater things of Him. But there are none who have the capacity to entertain such a desire.

"Manifest Thy divine Śakti to such an extent." It is beyond the power of Jīva to measure His greatness by saying "to such an extent". For this reason the extent to which He has manifested His Śakti for the removal of the burden of the earth in consequence of the tapasyā performed by the devotees is sufficient for Jīvas. So I say, Do not trouble yourself with the thought that the receptacle is small. It is not really so; it assumes a small form to serve the extremely small purposes of the small world. You and I, the small Jīvas of this small world, do not count even as much as the smallest atom in His view. What right have we to see His universal aspect, which is rarely seen by Brahmā and other Devas? Secondly, the Lord of the universe has no

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[1] Pūṭana was a female demon (Rākṣaśī) with poisoned breast, sent by Kamsa to destroy the infant Kṛṣṇa, who, however, destroyed her by sucking her breasts.

[2] By Kṛṣṇa.

[3] Brahmā stole the calves and cowherds of Gokula in order to test Kṛṣṇa's power. The latter assumed the forms of the stolen cows and cowherds, so their absence was not noticed. This lasted for one year, when the calves and cowherds were restored by Brahmā, and Kṛṣṇa withdrew his māyā.

[4] Deva of love. The reference here is to the Rāsalīlā.

[5] That is, the Gopīs. [6] Universal.

[7] Uncle of Kṛṣṇa, who induced Rāma and Kṛṣṇa to go to Mathura and kill Kamsa.

[8] River Yamunā.

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need to show that sort of lordliness which you and I show to others with greatness, largeness and the like. What avails our ignoring of His lordliness when even Śumbha, Niśumbha, Rāvaṇa, and Kumbhakarṇa,[1] could avail nothing by their ignoring it? So I say that when the greatly powerful King, Bali, could not save himself by looking on Vāmanadeva[2] as really a dwarf, why do we, who are really dwarfs, stretch out our arms to catch the moon shining in the firmament of the devotee's heart? As you use the illustration of water to show that a small receptacle cannot contain a vast śakti so I will take that of fire to show that an immeasurable śakti can be eternally hidden even in a small receptacle. Put a spark of fire on a mountain heap of grass, and you will see that spark will extend throughout it and will illumine every side with enormous tongues of flame, kissing the cheeks of the firmament. The spark is no longer a spark, but has become a destructive fire flaming terrifically and fit to consume the whole heap. Similarly, however small Bhagavān's appearance in His incarnation may seem to you to be, bring to it a substance fit for the display of divine manifestation[3] and you will see that the Brahmāṇḍa is filled with the eternal Brahma-play of Śakti and has become the field for the display of Śakti such as the Nṛsimha of Prahlāda,[4] Śrīkṛṣṇa of Arjuna, Gopāla[5] of Yaśodā, Śyāmasundara[6] of the herdswomen,[7] Nandanandana of Akrūra,[8] Śyāmā of Śumbha,[9] Umā of Himālaya,[10] Sītā of Rāma,[11] and Satī of Śiva.[12] You will then realize that His greatness is not small, but that the Jīva's capacity is small; His

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[1] Daityas and Rākṣasas. The last was brother of Rāvaṇa.

[2] Incarnation of Viṣṇu, in the form of a dwarf.

[3] Vibhūti.

[4] The man-lion incarnation of Viṣṇu for the protection of the son of Hiraṇyakaśipu.

[5] One of Kṛṣṇa's 108 names. That by which he was called by Yaśodā.

[6] The name by which Kṛṣṇa was called by the Gopīs.

[7] Gopīs of Vraja who loved Kṛṣṇa.

[8] Name of Kṛṣṇa; as to Akrūra, see *post*.

[9] The Devī Victrix of the demon Śumbha (see *post*).

[10] The Devī as daughter of Himālaya and wife of Śiva. As to the derivation of the name see the first canto of Kālidāsa's Kumāra-sambhavam. Umā unmarried, is the śakti of will, as the Sūtra says, "Icchāśakti umā kumārī"

[11] Wife of Rāma.

[12] Devī, wife of Śiva and daughter of Dakṣa.

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appearance is not small, but the eyes of Jīva are so. He is not small, but you and I are so. So I say, O Sādhaka, do not suppose that a small receptacle cannot hold the eternal Śakti, or proceed to measure the greatness of Mahāmāyā, whose power can make that possible which seems impossible.

But while there is yet time, seek the protection of Her feet, and opening the door of your heart say: "Mother, all my intelligence, learning, and reasoning are at an end. Now be gracious to me. In my struggle with doubt stand before me as Thou didst stand before Arjuna and before Śumbha. Fill the world for once with Thy true appearance so that my birth may be blessed, my life may be blessed, my eyes may be blessed and I, O Mother, may sink in Thee, becoming wholly Thine."

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CHAPTER VI

WORSHIP OF DEVATĀS

SĀDHAKA, against our wish we are obliged to say again that the healers of whom we have spoken are wont to quote four sayings from the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra as evidence in favour of their views. Though these statements are supposed to be evidence on their behalf, we shall in order to show what this evidence is, quote the entire text consisting of the Devī's questions and the answer of Sadāśiva. From these texts the right thinking will readily understand how difficult it is to become a healer without killing thousands.[1]

In the fourteenth Ullāsa of this Tantra,[2] after Mahādeva had spoken of the rules and ritual relating to the consecration of the images of Devas, Devī said:

"Lord, tell me truly what devotees should do if, for some unforeseen reason, the consecrated image of a Devatā is left without worship. Tell me also through what faults images of Devas become unfit for worship, for what faults they should be rejected, and what means exist for remedying those faults."

Sadāśiva said:

"If there be an omission to worship for a day, then the worship should be twice performed; if for two days, then the worship should be four times performed; if for three days it should be celebrated eight times. If the omission does not exceed six months then the Deva should be bathed with eight jars full of water, sanctified by His mantra, and then worshipped. If the omission to perform worship exceeds six months, then the image should again be consecrated and then worshipped. If the image of a Deva is defective, cracks, or breaks, it should be consigned to water. If it has fallen on unholy ground it should not be worshipped. A defective, cracked, or broken image should be

[1] That is to say, without having had experience at the cost of others.

[2] Verse 95 *et seq.*

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consigned to water, but an image polluted by touch should be purified and then again worshipped. Mahāpīṭhas[1] and Anādilingas[2] are free from all faults—that is to say, the above-mentioned causes do not operate on them to detract from their virtue. For this reason the people should worship their own Iṣṭadevas[3] in them for the attainment of their desired blessings.[4] Mahāmāya, I have thus related to you in detail all that you wished to know for the good of men who act with a view to the fruits of action."[5]

As He thus spoke the eye in the forehead of Bhagavān Mahākāla opened as if to peer into futurity.

Nowadays one meets with many an adept in Tattva,[6] who professes to have renounced action, and says at every opportunity: "The karmakāṇḍa[7] is intended only for those who are devoid of knowledge; why then should he who has attained to it do action?"

Unfortunately, most of those who say this are themselves doers of karma.[8] What they therefore say must mean that such karma alone as consists in the worship of Devas is for those who are devoid of true knowledge; while such karma as is required for the service of wife, children, and the like may be done even by those possessed of true knowledge. For their Śāstra says: "It is also by doing what pleases Him that He is worshipped." However that may be, it was as if He thought of what would happen in the future that Bhagavān, who dwells in the hearts of all wise men, said:[9] No Jīva possessing body can be without

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[1] Holy shrines where the body of Devī as Satī fell to earth (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[2] Anādi, without beginning. That is, those lingams which spring from earth supernaturally (called Svāyambhū, or self-existent), as distinguished from those fashioned and installed by men. Of the former class are the lingams at Vaidyanātha, Tārakeśvara, the Candraśekhara at Chittagong and other places.

[3] The worshipper's own chosen Deity.

[4] Dharma, Artha, Kāma, Mokṣa.

[5] That is, those on the path of pravṛtti, who act interestedly (sakāma karma), as opposed to those who renounce, and who act rightly and unselfishly without thought of gaining fruit of their action (niṣkāma karma).

[6] Sacred science.

[7] The portion of the scripture which relates to worship, ritual practice (karma), which last word means that which is done, action.

[8] See *post.*

[9] Verse 104 *et seq.* of chap. xiv of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra.

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karma for even half a minute. Helpless he is drawn by the current of karma even against his will. That is to say, just as everything follows the wind, which it is unable to check, so everyone follows the irresistible flow of karma. By karma[1] alone Jīva enjoys happiness, by karma alone he suffers misery. Under the influence of karma alone he is born, lives, and dies. For this reason I have made mention of various kinds of karma in sādhana-yoga, in order to attract the minds of those of little knowledge to nirvāṇa-dharma[2]—that is to say, in order to induce them to work until they reach the stage which follows nirvikalpa samādhi,[3] and to keep them away from wrong action (that is to say, if the mind remains ever engaged in the thought of good things, no bad thoughts can germinate in it)."

Sadāśiva next proceeded to explain the subject of karma with more explicitness:[4] "Karma is of two kinds, auspicious and inauspicious. Through the latter Jīva suffers acute pain and, O Devī ! through the former Jīva becomes attached to the fruits of action, and controlled by the bonds of karma, sojourns again and again in this world and the next." That is to say, you must correct your notion of a twofold bond of karma to the effect that karma consisting of worship of Devas and Devīs is the cause of bondage, whilst that done in the service of the world removes bondage; and you must understand that whatever you do is karma, that what is good karma is auspicious, and what is bad karma is inauspicious, and that both auspicious and inauspicious karma are instrumental in causing the bondage of Jīva to samsāra.

"Not even in a hundred kalpas[5] can Jīva attain liberation unless both his auspicious as well as inauspicious karma come to an end"—that is to say, as good karma will come to an end so will bad karma come to an end with it; otherwise, if all your good karma pass away, leaving the flow of your bad karma the same or gradually increasing, such a destruction of karma will

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[1] See *post*.
[2] That is, to the path which leads to liberation.
[3] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.
[4] Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. xiv, verse 107.
[5] See *post*.

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not remove bondage to samsāra. Rather the want of good karma will break the tie with Heaven and make that with Hell yet firmer still through the influence of bad karma. "As it makes no difference to the binding power of a chain whether it be of iron or gold, so karma whether auspicious or inauspicious, is equally powerful to bind Jīva."[1] Accumulated karma, whether good or bad, inevitably acts so as to bring the Jīva back to samsāra. "Jīva, even though he be in constant action and endure hundreds of austerities, cannot attain liberation so long as he does not acquire true knowledge[2]"—that is to say, if knowledge is not sought as the accompaniment of action the latter alone can never be directly instrumental to secure liberation. "It is only after the destruction of sin and the purification of the heart by thought upon Tattva (the thought that Brahman alone in an essential sense exists, while the world does not—that is to say, that the world is nothing but a display[3] of the Brahman) and by performance of disinterested action[4] that knowledge dawns"[5]—that is to say, that knowledge only appears when the mind has been so purified by the practice of Brahma-Tattva and constant worship of Bhagavān with karma performed without desire for fruit, that no sinful propensity arises in it, but only the presence of the pure sattva guṇa is felt without the least appearance of the rajas and tamas guṇas.

"From Brahmā to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of māyā. Parabrahman alone is the sole truly existent one. When knowledge of this tattva is gained then the Jīva attains true happiness[6]"—that is to say, whatever variety we see in the dualistic world, is like a dream or a magic show, the creation of māyā. Just as the magician alone truly exists and all which he does is illusion, so the nondual Parabrahman alone is true and all the things raised by Him to form the samsāra are

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[1] Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chapter xiv, verses 109, 110.
[2] *Ibid.*, verse 111. [3] Vibhūti, see *post.*
[4] That is, niṣkāma karma (opposed to sakāma karma), or right action done unselfishly without hope of reward and simply because such action is right.
[5] Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. xiv, verse 112.
[6] *Ibid.*, verse 113. Brahmā is the first Deva of the Trinity, a transitory manifestation of the supreme Brahman.

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illusive. Just as when sleep is dispelled all dreams disappear, so, when, by the grace of Bhagavān, the sleep of māyā is dispelled, this samsāra, full of māyā, disappears at the same time. As when Jīva awakes he sees that he alone and neither sleep nor dream remains, so when Jīva becomes self-conscious he sees that neither māyā nor the samsāra remains, but only he himself as the Supreme Spirit.[1] It is only when Jīva thus sinks into the sea of Tattva[2] that he gains such happiness as never gives place to sorrow.

"He alone is free from the bonds of karma who, renouncing name and form, has attained to the knowledge that on the immutable Brahman all things[3] rest."[4] One must rise above name and form and make all things[3] rest in the true immutable Brahman. From this it must be understood that if Brahman is true and immutable, names and forms are false and mutable. What is true is stable and what is false is unstable, so that to reach the true the false must be abandoned. To sink in Brahmattattva, which is above māyā, names and forms which are made of māyā must be abandoned. By name and form we must understand not true name and form, but the name and form which arises from change of nature.[5] For instance, the true name of earth is earth. Its form is the ordinary ground. When, however, cups, jugs, pots, dishes, and other like things, are made of it, the names and forms of those articles are due to nothing but change—that is to say, had not the true form of earth been transformed into the changed forms of cups, and the like, the substance earth would never have received the names of cups, jars, and the like. When these break and return to the form of common earth those names also disappear along with those forms. Cups, jars, and the like, are all false; earth alone is true. Just as in understanding the nature[6] of earth I cannot leave out of consideration cups, and the like, so in directing the mind to the nature[6] of Brahman I must not omit to consider the Brahmāṇḍa consisting of names and forms. It was earth before the formation of cups, and subse-

[1] Paramātmā. [2] Here the infinite waters of the ocean of Brahman.
[3] *Lit.* "all Tattva rest." [4] Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, *ibid.*, verse 114.
[5] Vikāra: change of form or nature; transformation; deviation from natural state. In Sāṇkhya, Vikṛti is that which is evolved from a previous source or Prakṛti. [6] Tattva.

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quently it again became earth. Only for a short time between these two states the cry of "Cup, cup!" arose, which alone is to be considered false. Śāstra has therefore said: "If a thing which did not exist either before or afterwards appears to exist during a middle period, know it also to be false." This falsehood, again, is not fundamentally false. A thing seen in a dream may be false, but neither dream nor sleep is false. Similarly, this world may be false, but the māyā at its root never false. If sleep be false, who shows the dream? If māyā be false, who creates the samsāra? If māyā be false, then the samsāra becomes true. Māyā, therefore, exists and will exist, and it is through this māyā that mother Mahāmāyā must be seen.

Gītānjali[1] therefore sings:

"Veda says: vain is our effort, for everything,
O Brother ! is Māyā.
Tantra says through Māyā is heard the laugh of Mahāmāyā;
For it is the Mother's Māyā."

Veda says: "Whatever is designated by speech and called by name is Vikāra.[2] Only earth is true."[3] Vikāra is not false, it is only the state of change of that which is real. A changed thing is only the real thing in another state; it is only the changed name and form which appear and disappear. The true form has neither appearance nor disappearance. Just as cups, jars, dishes, or whatever else you may make with earth will undoubtedly remain earth in substance; as wrist-chains, bracelets, earrings, or whatever else you may make with gold will be gold in substance and nothing else, so in this dualistic world, with all its variety of names and forms, father, mother, brother, sister, wife, son, daughter, you and I, non-moving and moving things, insects, flies, and the other names and forms which we see, are all only the Parabrahman manifesting Itself in different forms, such forms being due to change by Māyā, and in reality nothing but a manifestation of Brahman.[4] The only distinction is that

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[1] A volume of verses by the Author.
[2] See *post.*
[3] Referring to the simile of a ghaṭa (jar). What is called jar is untrue; but the earth of which it is composed is true.
[4] Brahmavibhūti.

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in the body of Īśvara this power of manifestation[1] is fully manifested, whilst in the body of Jīva it is not so. I therefore said that because changed names and forms are false, the true names and forms are not so.

In the domain of Sādhana this is Brahma-vision. Gītāñjali[2] has therefore put into the mouth of Menakā:

"Umā is the adored of the world;
No mere daughter is She.
With Brahman as Hara, on a bejewelled throne,
She sits as Parabrahmasanātanī.[3]
Thy Tripurasundara Digambara[4] exists,
Far excelling in lustre ten million suns.
On the left of Hara sits my Umā,
Whose golden beauty shines as a thousand million moons.
There laughs Ṣaḍānana,[5] in Sadānanda's[4] arms;
Gajānana[6] dances in Jagadambā's[7] arms,
The Music of Śambhu's dambura[8]
Draws peals of laughter from Kumāra[9]
And from Ganeśa, at the clap of Umā's hands.
In the arms of two Brahmas[10] rest the two Brahma-children,[11]
And you and I again are Brahma's father and mother.
This samsāra instinct, with Brahma-bliss, is but a Vikāra[12] of Brahman,
And thus my perfect Brahman is His charming spouse.
O Mountain ! I hear another strange thing—
Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Hara are Umā's sons;
Umā is not thine and mine alone.
She exists as everything moving or immovable in the Universe.
Grandfather says She is grandmother

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[1] Referring to the simile of a ghaṭa (jar). What is called jar is untrue; but the earth of which it is composed is true.
[2] A volume of verses by the Author.
[3] Devī as the eternal Parabrahman.
[4] Śiva.
[5] The six-headed Kārtikeya, son of Śiva.
[6] Elephant-headed Ganeśa.
[7] The Devī.
[8] Śiva's drum.
[9] Kārtikeya, *vide ante*.
[10] Devī and Śiva.
[11] Kārtikeya and Ganeśa.
[12] See *post*.

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Who gave birth to Pīṭāmbara[1] and Digambara.[2]
Upon hearing you and me call her 'daughter'
How She must laugh in her mind !
Being thus ashamed and afraid to call Her daughter,
The Queen (Menakā) may well call herself the daughter's daughter
But that daughter is not daughter to the Queen alone.
If entreated She becomes even the daughter of a beggar-woman; Śiva Candra says, O Lady of the Mountain ! (Menakā)
Why, now that you know all, do you still call Her daughter?
Be yourself daughter for once.
And offering Jabā flowers to the daughter's lotus feet,
Cry: 'Victory to Mother !' "[3]

One must rise above names and forms and make all things[4] rest on the immutable Brahma. In order to rise above written names and forms discrimination[5] is necessary. Discrimination[5] is nothing but the understanding of the true nature of things. In discussing the fundamental nature of name and form the whole attention must be directed to the Parabrahman, just as in discussing the question of the substance of a cup the attention is directed to the earth (of which it is made). But because you must use names and forms this does not mean that you must leave this Brahmāṇḍa, with its names and forms, and go to live in another Brahmāṇḍa. Judge as you are, your name and form will accompany you to whatever Brahmāṇḍa you may go. One cannot, therefore, discuss name and form by throwing off name and form altogether. Just as the true nature of light would not be known were it not for the existence of darkness, so the non-dualistic existence[4] cannot be known without the existence of this dualistic Brahmāṇḍa composed of names and forms. Without it there could have been no judge of dualism and non-dualism,

[1] Viṣṇu, who, as Kṛṣṇa, wears yellow cloth.
[2] Śiva, who is naked.
[3] The gist of these verses is that Pārvatī and Śiva are not merely the daughter and son-in-law of the Lord of Mountains and Menakā, but are the one Supreme Spirit, manifesting as, and dwelling in, all forms.
[4] Tattva.
[5] Viveka.

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nor indeed any necessity for such a judge. To understand the true nature of earth it is not necessary to go to a country where there are no pots and potters. A person of intelligence will place a pot before himself, and see that under its form there is really nothing but earth. He who has recognized this is not astonished at the sight of a pot, but is, on the contrary, pleased to see the wonderful capacity which earth possesses of taking on forms. Similarly, he who has mastered the Brahmatattva[1] is not astonished at the sight of this created universe, but is, on the contrary, overjoyed to see the eternal śakti of Brahmamayī. He forgets all names and forms and sees in every form the Brahma-form underlying the worldly form. As everyone sees that there are pots, but the wise alone know that there is nothing but earth, so, although all see the samsāra full of wives, sons, and relations, the Tāntrik sādhaka alone knows that it is nothing but Brahmamayī's self. He who has understood that in order to rise above name and form it is necessary to forget that things have distinctive properties giving rise to such names and forms, and to know that the true Śakti of Brahma alone exists, he alone has risen above name and form and has perceived that all is but the immutable Brahman.

"No amount of japa, homa, and fasting will give liberation. It is by the realization alone that 'I am indeed Brahman,' that Jīva will gain liberation."

As the mind of a drunken or deeply slumbering man is not affected even if he is embraced by a young woman, so self-realization or perception of the real does not come to one who is intoxicated with an intense delusion[2] and is under the influence of the sleep of māyā, even should he be animated by Sādhana. If Japa, Homa, Vrata,[3] and fasts are not accompanied by self-knowledge they avail nothing, even though they be practised for a hundred years. It is not, however, meant that all japa, homa, etc., is ineffectual to gain liberation. For why, then, should it be necessary to state that (under certain conditions) they are so

[1] *i.e.*, who knows that all, whatever may be its varied appearance, is but the one Brahman.

[2] Moha.

[3] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

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ineffectual ? As a matter of fact, japa, homa, fasting are so many means of attaining self-knowledge. Śāstra has consequently said that liberation will not be gained even after a hundred years by the mere performance of the ordinary karma,[1] if there be complete disregard for what is fundamental—namely, self-knowledge. Śāstra does not mean that one who has known the self[2] has no karma to perform; it rather means that none but those who know the self have a right to perform karma.

Ātmā[3] is witness[4] (that is, it only looks upon the working of the universe caused by māyā without interest therein) and is omnipresent, perfect, true, without a second and higher than the highest. (Like the space in a room)[5] Ātmā possesses, yet does not possess, body (that is, although Ātmā inhabits the body, it remains ever detached from its qualities). Jīva attains liberation when he realizes this truth. He is without a doubt liberated who has cast off all idea of name and form as mere child's play and has become solely devoted to the Brahman.

During play children think of their dolls as sons and daughters; but their names and forms diasppear when play is over. In the same way, however much you may build in your own mind names and forms by the establishment of relationships, whether by way of wife, son, father, and mother, with jīvas who are the māyā-dolls in the play-ground of this samsāra, know it for certain that with the end of your earthly life all such names and forms will disappear. Therefore, he who has ceased from play and cast aside all māyik[6] names and forms while there is yet time, and who, setting his mind and Ātmā on the Para-brahman who is above māyā, has united himself with the Para-mātmā, such an one, even though inhabiting the māyik[6] body, is undoubtedly eternally free, like the Brahman Itself.

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[1] Ritual acts.

[2] Presumably the author here and in next line refers to the stages prior to complete self-recognition—*viz.*, regard for and endeavour to obtain self-knowledge.

[3] The Spirit.

[4] And so it is said: Ātmā sākṣī chetah kevalo nirguṇaśca" (Ātmā is the sole intelligent witness without attributes). To its endurance as permanent witness of all changing states is due the Kantian "synthetic unity of apperception".

[5] That is, space has no form itself but takes form from the room in which it is.

[6] Made of and by Māyā.

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"If images imagined in the mind could give liberation to Jīva, then one could also become a King by receiving a kingdom in dream."

As, despite his māyik body, Jīva may obtain freedom from birth by knowledge of the essential truth,[1] the perception of the truth of the Self being the sole cause of such freedom, so a Sādhaka may attain nirvāṇa kaivalya by the worship (with knowledge of the Self) of an image of Jagadambā in the form in which She appeared in māyā for the benefit of Her devotees, and by perception of the greatness of that image—that is, of the presence in it, in eternal forms of the eternal Śakti of Her who is eternity itself. This is the sole cause of such nirvāṇa kaivalya.[2]

He,[3] who with loins girt with yellow cloth, sat as Pārtha's[4] charioteer, glorious with the glory of his devotee, on the seat of Arjuna's chariot as the Pāṇḍavas' friend, holding the reins of the white horses in his left, and a whip in the right hand; He, who but a moment before, finding his friend Arjuna overcome by impatience and delusion,[5] unwilling to do his own dharma,[6] had counselled him in words of wisdom; He, in the twinkling of an eye, changed that form of His—that sweet form of a delicate, dark hue, like that of a freshly formed cloud, charming the minds and hearts of the whole world, and disappeared, and in the twinkling of an eye thousands of hands and feet of the universe-embracing great body extended to each of the ten quarters of the heavens, and a terrible mass of light, issuing from thousands of widely-expanded eyes, dimmed the rays of the sun. Notwithstanding his endowment of divine vision, that Prince of Heroes, Arjuna, shook with fear, and with trembling voice and folded hands said: "I cannot see the quarters of space nor am I at ease. Have mercy, O Lord of Devas ! in whom the world resides."

In Bali's[7] Yajña[8] heaven, earth, and the nether world were covered by the two feet of the Vāmana Brāhmaṇa.[9] By Bali's

[1] Ṭattva. [2] Supreme liberation (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.
[3] Śrī Kṛṣṇa. [4] Arjuna. [5] Māyā and Mohā. [6] Duty.
[7] Bali was a Daitya, grandson of Prahlāda, who conquered the three worlds and then performed a great yajña, in which he intended to give away all that belonged to him, when Viṣṇu as Vāmana appeared before him and asked for land sufficient to put three feet on. This was promised, when the Vāmana with two feet covered the world.
[8] Sacrifice. [9] The Viṣṇu avatāra of that name—as dwarf.

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good fortune a third foot, hitherto unseen by even Brahmā and other Devas, shot out from Bhagavān's navel, through the wonderful śakti of the Almighty. Advised by his Queen, who was learned in spiritual lore, King Bali bowed down, and then the foot, the dispeller of fear and the wealth of devotees, was placed on his head. The fortunate King Bali went to the nether world, and Bhagavān, the reliever of the burdens of the world, abandoned even Vaikuṇṭha, and Himself became Bali's door-keeper in the nether world. To-day, only if he permits and kindly opens the door, can one see King Bali. The Lord of Vaikuṇṭha,[1] the monarch of monarchs, Himself stands at Bali's door, though at His own door of Vaikuṇṭha Brahmā and other Devas ever remain standing, praying for admittance to His presence, the all-in-all of a devotee's life. Bhagavān, the creator of all things, Thou alone, O Lord ! knowest the greatness of a devotee. And you, King Bali, a Prince of Daityas,[2] are a Prince of Devotees. What kingdom is it which you have acquired, to guard which the Supreme Monarch of the universe has Himself become your door-keeper ?

Again, on the banks of the Yamunā, at the root of the kadamba-tree, the sweet flute[3] sounded. By what mantra of what secret sādhana we know not, the fair women of the city of Vraja stood in their thousands in the ecstasy of their great love,[4] surrounding Bhagavān, the son of Nanda, as immovable stars surround the full moon. Instantly, by virtue of his wonderful Vaiṣṇavī māyā, Bhagavān appeared to each of them in a separate body, and threw his arms round the neck of each of the fair women, unseen by the others. The Devas assembled in the sky above Bṛndāvana in order to see the incomparable beauty of the body of Kṛṣṇa in the waters of the Yamunā, on land and in space. Amidst showers of flowers offered by them with reverence, to the joyous sounds of music and dancing by Vidyādharas, Siddhas, Gandharvas, Kinnaras, Apsarās, Yakṣas, and Cāraṇas,[5] to the song of triumph by the herds-women, and amidst the mani-

[1] Viṣnu's heaven.
[2] Demonic beings.
[3] Of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
[4] Rāsa.
[5] Various forms of celestial male and female spirits (Devayoni).

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festation of the perfect greatness of Pūrṇa Brahmasanātana,[1] the huge waves of the heroic valour of the charmer of Madana[2] rolled in the sea of the play of love.[3]

The sight of the misery of Devas, caused by the oppressions of Mahiṣa the Asura, pained the loving heart of Her who is full of mercy for all sufferers. She, who embodies all śaktis, manifested Her śakti and appeared in the form of a mass of fury born of the anger of the Devas. The earth sank under the weight of the beauteous lotus feet of that form, all full of consciousness of Her who is consciousness itself. Her crown pierced the firmament, and, delighting in war, She stood extending Her thousand arms over the field of battle. Seeing the Brahman aspect of the Brahmamayī the immortals shouted: "Victory ! victory ! victory ! " and in joy began to worship the lotus feet of the blissful Devī.

Again, when previous to the destruction of Śumbha and Niśumbha,[4] Kauśiki[5] emerged from the body of Pārvatī, beautiful as a golden champak flower, the fair appearance of Pārvatī became instantly changed into the shining blue lustre, more beautiful than that of a blue lotus, of Umā, who appeared as Śyāmā. Into the glowing fire of Her presence the King of the Daityas jumped and was thereupon consumed as if he were a mere insect. Again, in the battle with Caṇḍa and Muṇḍa,[4] the śakti of Cāmuṇḍa[5] burst forth from the forehead of Śyāmā, wrinkled with wrath. In the battle with Raktabīja,[4] Śivadūtī[6] issued from Śyāmā, who is Mūlaprakṛti. In the fight with Śumbha it was into Her body that Brahmāṇī and other Śaktis suddenly disappeared, Prior to Dakṣa's yajña[7] ten Mahāvidyās appeared from out of the single body of Satī and again disappeared into it. Again, at the time of the destruction of that yajña, a shadow-Satī[8] appeared from out of the original body of Satī, and the māyik body was abandoned into the fire of yajña. Later,

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[1] The full eternal Brahman. [2] The Deva of love.
[3] The passage refers to the rāsalīlā play of love of Śri Kṛṣṇa and the Gopīs.
[4] Demons (see the Devī-Māhātmya).
[5] A terrific form of the Devī. [6] A Śakti issuing from Śyāmā.
[7] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and *ante*.
[8] Chhāyāsatī.

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in the home of Himālaya, he was shown the world-form manifestation of Brahman in the newly-born body of a daughter,[1] and into that body again those manifestations were withdrawn.

The appearance and disappearance in the manner of innumerable playful bodies from and into Her single body clearly proves that the body of Sacchidānandamayī[2] is nothing but Sacchidānanda; that the variety in forms is due to variety in māyā made by Her own desire, and that there is no means of specifying any of Her particular forms as being Her real form truly defined by unquestionable signs. From the One comes the infinite, which becomes One again by the disappearance of the infinite. In this manner, in Her body, in the twinkling of an eye, there is creation, and in another twinkling a dissolution.[3] In this state of things to endeavour to ascertain the forms of Her who is co-extensive with the universe is but the counting of the waves of the sea. Again, in the hearts of Sādhakas who have attained Siddhi She appears and disappears eternally in infinite forms, such forms changing at every moment; this being so, it is impossible to say that She is in reality bound to any one particular form. To know, therefore, the truth[4] as to Her form, we must understand that Her real Self is above all forms. Though connected with infinite forms, She is, in fact, unattached to any form. Whenever the Icchāmayī[5] puts forth any form of māyā according to Her desire, then a reflection appears of the form which She willingly assumes. Seeing that reflection in the mirror of māyā She becomes charmed with Her own form and, like an enchanted girl, the Ānandamayī[6] dances with joy and claps Her hands. In the establishment of a dual relationship between Jīva and Brahman She dances in Her own joy, into which She sinks.

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[1] Devī incarnating as Pārvatī.

[2] The Devī as existence, knowledge, and bliss. Sacchidānanda is the Brahman.

[3] So in the Lalitā Sahasranāma (verse 66), it is said: "Unmeṣanimiṣotpannavipannabhuvanāvaliḥ" (The series of worlds arise and disappear with the opening and shutting of Her eyes).

[4] Tattva.

[5] The Devī whose substance is will.

[6] The Devī whose substance is bliss.

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Overwhelmed with emotion at this play of Hers, a Sādhaka, had said:

"Kālī, Charmer of the mind of Mahākāla ! Thou who art ever full of bliss, Thou danceth in Thy own joy, O Mother ! and Thyself dost clap Thy hands."

He who, when practising Sādhana of the Brahma-forms of the Brahmamayī, does not possess this knowledge concerning the Brahman is not, in fact, competent to worship Her forms. Whenever, during creation, preservation, and destruction, a necessity has arisen for any particular form She who is will itself has entered into that form, and when Her purpose has been served, that māyik form has at once disappeared. The forms, however, with which the eternal flow of the universe is eternally concerned and in which the three principles[1] of creation, preservation, and destruction are contained are ever true and eternal. As they are eternal before creation, so they are eternal after the great dissolution; for the Śāstra has said that such eternal forms are resident in the non-dualistic region unknown to this ephemeral māyik world.[2]

Veda has said:

"Just as one fire in entering into the womb of earth assumes in every object its form, so the one Dweller in all objects assumes their forms."

Fire exists in a subtle form in every object in this world composed of the five elements; but from without it is not at all visible. If, however, there is friction by mutual contact, or fire from without touches it, the fire burns forth. It is the law of Nature that what does not exist in a thing can never appear in it. Had not fire existed in a subtle form in everything in the world, all things would not have been combustible. We must therefore understand that fire exists eternally in the subtlest form in every atom of any object, and that it also exists in a subtle form in the gross body of any object (which is but a conglomeration of atoms), permeating every part of it. For this reason the body of a piece

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[1] Tattva.

[2] That is, the forms referred to exist in potential state, otherwise there could be no recreation after dissolution.

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of wood composed of the five elements should also be considered as the body of one of those elements—namely, fire. Similarly, Paramātma,[1] which dwells in all things, enters and exists throughout the body of the universe.[2] Tantra has therefore said that he cannot worship images who is ignorant of the spiritual knowledge, that "She exists as Śakti in even vehicles, stones, and metals." Again, Śrīmad Bhāgavata has said images are of eight kinds—namely, those made of stone, wood, iron, vermilion, sandal paste, etc., painted, made of sand, jewels, and mental. "At the time of worship a Sādhaka first of all worships the mental image inwardly,[3] and then, after communicating the spirit[4] of Brahman within him to the image without, commences external worship. Again, those who worship yantras[5] without an image, worship the mental image of the Devatā. This is the fundamental principle[6] relating to Her eternal presence and manifestation in yantras and images. For those who do not understand Her omnipresence and this communication of the inward spirit, but merely think to attain liberation by the simple imagination of a form in their minds, such liberation is but a dream." Śāstra has therefore said:

"If the mere imagination of forms in the mind, without spiritual knowledge and sādhana, can secure liberation, then people can also become kings by receiving kingdoms in dreams."

Along with the contemplation of images the entire fundamental truth concerning them must be understood. When this is understood it must be realized,[7] and then the spirit must be communicated to the external image, when the process of giving it life will have been accomplished.[8] It is only when in this

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[1] The Supreme Spirit.

[2] The Brahman is in, though also beyond, the Brahmāṇḍa.

[3] Literally, "in inward yajña," as to which see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and last chapter.

[4] Tejas—light, force, brilliance, spirit.

[5] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[6] Tattva, or truths.

[7] Literally, "made Pratyakṣa." There are four kinds of proof, according to Nyāya, and three according to Sāṅkhya. The latter are: (1) Pratyakṣa, or direct perception by the mind and senses of sight, smell, touch, taste, and sound; (2) anumānam, or inference; (3) śabda-pramāṇam, or scriptural proof; to which the Nyāya adds (4) upamāna—that is, analogy or recognition of likeness.

[8] That is, the prāṇapratiṣṭā rite (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

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manner the Devatā has been established that the lustre of consciousness of Caitanyamayī[1] will burst through that earthly image and scatter its rays around, illuminating the heart of the Sādhaka, filling him with joy and liberating his soul from physical existence. The Sādhaka will find this subject[2] dealt with in greater detail in the Chapter on ordinary worship.

Preserving the former śloka,[3] in the form of a sūtra,[4] Bhagavān Himself has explained it in the form of a clear vṛtti:[5]

"Without knowledge men cannot attain liberation, even though they practise severe austerities with the full belief that images made of earth, metals, wood, and the like are Īśvara Himself."

Ritual action[6] is futile if, in performing it, one is ignorant of the supreme Truth which is to destroy the bonds arising from action. If I do not know by what process this earthen image which I worship is changed into an image full of consciousness, then my image worship is nothing but earth worship. Śāstra has therefore said that without knowledge no amount of severe austerities will enable one to see the True Form of Her Who is the embodiment of all spiritual and intellectual knowledge. It is the sight of Her alone which frees one of bondage. He who is devoid of such knowledge is therefore not qualified to worship images. Without knowledge neither asceticism[7] nor enjoyment of worldly pleasure can give liberation.

To illustrate this Bhagavān has said:

"If performance of Karma[8] alone, without knowledge of the Brahman, can give liberation, then those who by fasting have reduced themselves to skeletons, and those who, through gluttony, have become big-bellied, can gain liberation by such abstinence and indulgence. But in truth are they really liberated?" "If the mere performance of a vow to live on air, grass, broken particles of rice, or water alone can give liberation, then serpents, beasts, birds, and animals of the waters also (who live on such things) can be liberated (in spite of the absence of knowledge)."

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[1] The Devī Whose substance is consciousness. [2] Tattva. [3] Verse.
[4] Aphorism. [5] A form of commentary. [6] Karma. [7] Tapasyā
[8] Ritual action, austerities, alms-giving, and action generally, etc.

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There are four different forms of worship called "states" or "dispositions,"[1] according to four different states of knowledge. These are: "Seeing the Brahman in all things; this is the highest form.[2] Constant contemplation[3] of the Devatā in the heart is the middle form. Recitation of mantras[4] and saying of hymns[5] is the lowest form, and mere external worship[6] is lower than these."

"Perception of the identity of Jīvātmā and Paramātmā is Brahmabhāva. Concentration of mind on the Devatā by the process of yoga is dhyānabhāva. Pūjā is the bhāva which arises out of the dualistic idea of the servant and the Lord, the worshipper and the worshipped. But he who knows that all is Brahman needs neither yoga nor pūjā, because his competency is such that he has risen above both the bhāvas of yoga and pūjā. For him there is neither worshipper nor worshipped, but all is Brahman. In his sight Jīva and Brahman, Īśvara and Sādhaka are not different things. Where there is no difference between two things there can be no yoga nor worship of the one by the other. For this reason, hymn, recitation of mantra, contemplation, concentration, vows, restraint,[7] and the like, are not for those[8] who know the Brahman. "For him in whose heart the highest knowledge, that of the Brahman, reigns, recitation, sacrifice, austerities, restraints, vows,[9] and the like are useless." They are not only useless for him, but he has not even the right to do ritual acts.

The Sādhaka will now gradually see who is such a knower of Brahman. "The Brahman, who is the embodiment of pure knowledge and bliss, alone is true"—that is, without Him all this visible world is but the false display of māyā. "Whoever realizes this and becomes Brahman, for him there is no longer any necessity for external worship, contemplation, and concentration."[10]

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[1] Bhāva. [2] *Ibid.* [3] Dhyāna (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[4] Japa, v. *ibid.* [5] Stava. [6] Pūjā.
[7] Stava, japa, dhyāna, dhāraṇa, vrata, niyama (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[8] Literally, "are beyond the adhikāra (competency)."
[9] Japa, Yajña, Tapas, Niyama, Vrata (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[10] Pūja, dhyāna, and dhāraṇa.

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"I am Jīva." The liberated Mahāpuruṣa whose heart is freed from the egoism involved in this saying has neither sin, nor piety, nor heaven,[1] nor rebirth. For him who has realized that all is Brahman there is neither subject for meditation nor person meditating, neither Jīva to meditate nor Īśvara on Whom he may meditate.

"This Ātmā is always free and unattached to any objects. In what bondage can it be? Why, then, should men of perverted intellect demand its liberation ?"[2]

"The Universe is composed of His own māyā, and impenetrable even to the intellect of Devas. Ātmā exists as one who has entered into it although in reality He does not enter into it."

"Just as space exists both inside and outside all things, so Ātmā, whose substance is consciousness, shines as witness, both inside and outside all things."

"Ātmā has neither birth, boyhood, youth, nor age, It is ever the same, incorruptible, and is consciousness."

"Birth, youth, age, and the like belong to the gross body alone. Ātmā is free of them. Jīvas whose intellects are obscured by māyā see this, but yet seem not to see this."

"Just as the one sun appears as many (when reflected) in the water contained in a vessel (although in reality the sun is one and not many), so in the water of māyā contained in the vessel of the Jīva's gross body Ātmā appears as many (although in reality it is one and not many)."

"As when the lunar orb is reflected in water a fool, who sees the quivering of the restless ripples, thinks that the lunar orb itself is quivering, so those who are destitute of true knowledge, on seeing the restlessness of intellect, think that the Ātmā is restless."

"As when a cup is broken the space contained in it remains the same, so even when the body is destroyed Ātmā remains the same."

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[1] Svarga.

[2] That is, the Ātmā is ever free. It is the Buddhi which must be liberated from the bonds which obscure this actually existing freedom.

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"Devī, when Jīva attains this supreme knowledge of the self which alone can give salvation, he is liberated even in this world. This is true, again true, and without a doubt true."

"Neither action,[1] nor charity, nor progeny[2] can bring liberation. Knowledge of the Ātmā by the Ātmā can alone give liberation to man."[3]

"Ātmā is the dearest of all. There is nothing so dear as the Ātmā. O consort of Śiva! all other things (wife, son, and the like, etc.) become dear because of their relation to Ātmā."

"Knowledge, object of knowledge, and knower—this three-fold division is caused by māyā. If we carefully consider the nature[4] of these three, Ātmā alone, which is knowledge, remains in the end."

"It is Ātmā or consciousness who is knowledge, it is Ātmā who is the object of knowledge, and it is Ātma who is the person who knows. He who knows this knows the truth."

"I have thus related to you the truth[5] about knowledge, the direct cause of nirvāṇa liberation. This is the highest treasure of the four classes of avadhūtas."[5]

The religious healers, of whom we have already spoken, quote the following four ślokas out of those above-mentioned as strong evidence in support of their theory that He is devoid of form:[6]

"He alone is free from the bonds of Karma who has risen above name and form and has made all principles and things rest on the true immutable Brahman." "He is undoubtedly liberated who has shaken off all notions of name and form as though they were child's play, and has solely devoted himself to Brahman." "If forms imagined in the mind can give salvation

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[1] Karma.

[2] That is, through their offering of the piṇḍa in the obsequial rites.

[3] Only the Ātmā can know Ātmā. [4] Tattva.

[5] Those who have renounced the world: ascetics. The life of the avadhūta is the Sannyāśrama of the Kali Yuga (see Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. viii, verse 2). The term has been defined as follows:

"Akṣaratvāt vareṇyatvāt dhūtasamsāravandhanāt.
Tattvamasyārthasiddhatvādavadhūtobhidhīyate."

(An avadhūta is so called on account of his being possessed of undecaying greatness, having washed off the bonds of samsāra and learnt the meaning of (the great saying) "Thou art That.")

[6] Nirākāravāda.

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to Jīva, then men may also be Kings by receiving kingdoms in dreams." "Without knowledge men cannot attain liberation even though they practise severe austerities with the full belief that images made of earth, metals, wood, etc., are Īśvara Himself.'

From the explanation which, along with those ślokas we have given of their meaning, supported by consideration of the context, conclusion, and object, Sādhakas will understand to what perversion of śāstrik conclusions the wrong interpretations of present day interpreters, blinded by selfishness, lead. Śāstra says that Jīva, before he can attain liberation, must forget the condition of Jīva subject to māyā, assumed by Brahman in the māyā-built Brahmāṇḍa, and sink himself in the unity of Jīva and Brahman, which it is the purpose of all great sayings, such as "Thou art It," to establish. Jīva must rise above all names and forms which are the object of dualistic knowledge. According to our notion of this non-dualistic perception of the truth[1] we, whilst keeping intact the names and forms of our own selves and relatives and also of the whole world, consisting of moving and non-moving things, yet consider it to be the pith of the teaching that it is only the names and forms of Devatās which are false and that these only should be abandoned. I fail to understand the necessity for such hurry in doing away with that particular name and form which alone will endure, whilst keeping those names and forms which will prove to be false. It is as though a great famine threatens the market of Brahmajñāna[2]—a famine which will make all things so dear, that whatever purchase be now made will then be profitable. I do not want to deprive them of this profit. What I am sorry for is that the names and forms which constitute the bonds of samsāra remain, whilst the names and forms which will cut those bonds is done away with. Hearing that the price of things will go on increasing our purchasers have been in such a hurry that they have forgotten to bring even the wherewithal to make purchases at the outset. Even He has been forgotten Whose worship gives the fruit of the knowledge of Brahman. I know that they say: "For him whose

[1] Tattva. [2] Knowledge as to the Brahman.

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nature has become Brahman[1] there is no longer any necessity for pūjā, dhyāna and dhāraṇa." We, too, do not deny this. Śāstra has said: "Whose nature," That is, the case of the man who, even without dhyāna and the like remains immersed in Brahma-bliss as naturally as he eats or sleeps. For one who has thus become Brahman or, in other words, whose condition of a Jīva has disappeared and been converted into Brahman; for him there is no longer any necessity for dhyāna, dhāraṇa, and pūjā. But through our ill-fortune it has nowadays so happened that a number of persons who, by nature, are Brahma-ghosts,[2] have appeared who have neither dhyāna, nor dhāraṇa, nor pūjā, nor adoration. The words of the Śāstra cannot be false. As a matter of fact, such self-willed people who pervert the true meaning of the Śāstra have no right to dhyāna, dhāraṇa, pūjā, or japa. Consequently, these things do not exist so far as they are concerned. The four ślokes on which they rely are preceded by the śloka: "From Brahmā to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of māyā, and Parabrahma alone is the sole truth. When this knowledge is attained Jīva attains liberation." The śloka: "Ātmā is witness, omnipresent, perfect, true, without a second and higher than the highest. Ātmā possesses body and yet does not possess it. Jīva attains liberation when he realizes this truth," is in the midst of the ślokas cited. The following śloka follows them: "If, without knowledge of Brahman, performance of Karma alone can give liberation, then such men as are reduced to skeletons by constant fasting, and such men as become big-bellied by excess of eating may be liberated through such abstinence and indulgence. But are they really liberated?" We fail, then, to understand how these four ślokas, can be put forward to prove that "Brahman cannot have any form," seeing that they relate to knowledge of Brahman. Śāstra of course, says: "From Brahmā to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of māyā, and Parabrahman alone is the sole truth,"

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[1] Svabhāvāt Brahmabhūta.

[2] The reference is to the sect of Brāhmos. There is here a pun on the term, "bhūta," which, used as a suffix, means "state," and used independently means (among other things) "ghost".

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and we, too, do not deny this. But in the world, where everything from Brahmā to a blade of grass is false, are you and I—advocates of the theories of Brahman possessing form, and Brahman being formless respectively—are we true? If this word "false" means non-existent, then you and I too do not exist. I admit that spiritually you and I do not exist, but because we admit it do we really feel it? Is it possible that such men as do feel it question whether Brahman possesses or does not possess form ? Where you and I turn out false, where your "you-ness" and my "I-ness" disappear, two persons cannot exist. And where two do not exist, with whom can there be argument ? Now, will the dualistic world become non-existent because you and I desire it to be so ? Śāstra has said everything from Brahmā to a blade of grass is false; but the question is, whether we have ever been able to make even a single blade of grass false as the Śāstra says? If we have not, why do we, who have not the power to do away with a blade of grass, presume to do away with Brahmā ? Do we feel ashamed even to think of this ? Why, the very Śāstra which is invoked to do away with the existence of Devas and Devis, who are Brahmās with forms, that very Śāstra itself says: "From Brahmā to a blade of grass." If Brahman does not take form, whence comes this Brahmā ? And if it is "from Brahman" instead of "from Brahmā," then everything vanishes, and nothing remains as true.

Śāstra is the command of Devatā. For Jīvas it contains ordinances and teachings. Because it has said that the world is false you and I cannot beat time to that tune and dance. The speaker of Śāstra is Bhagavān, who dwells in all things, and is above māyā. Its hearer is Maheśvarī. She who dwells in all things is turīya-caitanya[1] incarnate, and governs universal māyā. To them the falsity of the world is a matter of direct perception; but to you and me it is Brahma-tattva,[2] attainable only by age-long Sādhana, and beyond the reach of mind and speech. What the result of a battle will be is the concern of the King or Queen; the soldier's only duty is to start for war immediately on receiving

[1] As to the turīya state of consciousness, see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and *ante*.

[2] The truth concerning the Brahman.

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an order to do so. The King and Queen know that in this war their victory is inevitable, so that in their conversation on the subject they can express satisfaction and joy. But if, on hearing this conversation their soldiers were to think, "Since victory is inevitable what is the use of fighting?" and were to give themselves up to rejoicing, it is most likely that the banner of triumph would fly in the dust. You say: "Mahādeva has said that the world is false; why, then, should I worship and adore names and forms?" If, with this idea that the world is nothing but Brahman, Sādhakas were to give up performing worship and ritual,[1] the kind of Brahma-knowledge which will be attained, and is, in fact, being nowadays attained, is not worth mentioning. Veda has said: "When everything in relation to a Jīva has been unified with Brahman what will he then see, what will he hear, what will he smell, etc., and with what?" That is to say, where mind, intellect, body, senses, and everything else is Brahman, then worship and ritual[1] is impossible. It is of no use to see Brahman, to hear Brahman, etc., with Brahman. The author of Vedānta Paribhāṣā concludes: "Although the world is false, it is not false to those who are in the samsāra." That is to say, a dream is not false when a person sees it. Had dreams been false when seen, why should we have cried with terror at the sight of tigers in dreams? Śruti, again, says as the result of a spurious perception of a dualistic world, Jīva becomes instantly separated from Brahman and sees the world in a separate aspect. Philosophers have therefore said as follows: Although the notion that the body is the Self is spiritually false, it is yet deemed an established fact from the worldly point of view—that is to say, people consider the body to be the Self and say: "I have become thin, I have become fat, I have been cured, I am ill, etc."; yet Ātmā, which is nothing but existence, consciousness, and bliss, is neither thin nor fat, diseased nor cured, but is ever free from change or corruption, joy, sorrow, disease, grief, thinness, fatness, etc., which are conditions of the body alone. Just as people consider the body to be that Ātmā, and consider all these conditions to be established facts in the worldly state, so the dualistic world, though in fact

[1] Karma.

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false, must yet, so long as Brahman is not perceived in all things, be considered as an established separately-existing fact. We know that the sun always rises in the east; still, if we go to a new place, it appears that the sun is rising in the west, north, or south. Just as, in spite of knowing the truth in this matter and disbelieving the opposite, we become firmly convinced that that opposite itself is really true; just as this mistake in the matter of the direction or the sun's rising is inevitable, so this false perception of the dualistic world also is inevitable. We cannot be asked as a favour to accept the dualistic world as an established fact. Until this dream of māyā is dispelled, until the bonds of Karma are destroyed, until the idea of difference between "you and me" disappears, Jīva cannot but have faith in this dualistic universe, call it false, a dream, or fancy, as you may. The influence of Karma, the force of action, will compel me, even against my own will, to believe in it. Just as a week fish caught in a net in water can never pass outside the net, however much it may move about inside it, so the worldly Jīva caught in the māyā of the samsāra can never sever the bonds of māyā and enter into the unfathomable depth of Brahmatattva outside of māyā. Just as, in spite of being in water, the fish is prevented from moving out by the bondage of the net, so, in spite of being in the universe full of Brahman, Jīva is prevented by the bondage of māyā from entering freely into that Blissful Presence. Living in this dualistic world, you and I, māyik Jīvas, are, therefore, bound to believe in it as a constant reality even against our will, although it is in fact not so.

Every worshipper is actuated by an earnest desire to know the nature[1] of his real self; but the existence of the desire does not bring about its fulfilment for all. It is for the accomplishment of this desire that sādhana is required. Without sādhana it can never be fulfilled. A child in the womb may, of course, form a desire to see its mother, but so long as it is in the womb it is impossible for it do so. The desire can be fulfilled only for that child who has fortunately been safely born. Similarly, it is impossible for people living in Mahāmāyā's māyā-womb of this universe to see that beautiful appearance of Hers which

[1] Tattva.

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charms the heart of the conqueror of Death.[1] He who has, by the accumulation of religious merits in many births, been delivered from the sheath of the womb of māyā of the Mother of the Universe, he alone is a fit child to see the Brahma-form of the Brahmamayī. It is only such a child who truly has the right to suck that milk from the breast of Brahmamayī, which even Brahmā and other Devas rarely obtain. He alone may share Her assuring lap with Kārtika and Ganeśa. If, however, on seeing the pains of austere Sādhana practised by any of Her children, the merciful Mother should gratify him; if She, who dwells in the heart of the Lord of Yogīs,[2] should rend the deep darkness of the black night[3] in Her womb by the mass of light issuing from Her black, cloudlike appearance, which dispels the fear of death and Herself appear in the heart of the child lying in yoga in her womb; if She cuts the bonds of samsāramāyā with the sharp edge of Her own māyā sword and takes the devoted sādhaka up on Her lap—then also in such a case know that this is done as the inevitable fruit of much austere sādhana practised in many previous births, and that none of these things have been accomplished without sādhana. It is a domain which none can reach but through real sādhana. Although the desire for going out may be strong, yet the door of the room in which Jīva is shut is not within his reach. The utmost that Jīva can do is to lie down on the bed of māyā and weep; but it is Mother alone who can open the door. Jīva can only weep loudly and awaken the Mother. By virtue of austere sādhana the Sādhaka can awaken Mother Kulakuṇḍalinī,[4] sleeping in the Mulādhāra.[5] If She rises and opens the door of Brahmarandhara,[5] then alone may Jīva come forth; otherwise all worship and adoration are but a crying in the wilderness. The siddhi, which is attained in Sādhana by the piercing of the six chakras,[6] is never attained by Jīva whilst he is crushed by the wheels of the Samsāra.

Secondly, it is not within the province of Jīva to say whether Brahman has or has not name and form and even if he speaks

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[1] Mṛtyuñjaya, or Śiva. [2] Mahādeva; Śiva. [3] Kālarātrī.
[4] *Vide ante* and *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*
[5] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.* [6] Ṣaṭcakrabheda (*vide ante*).

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none will hear him, for the matter[1] is beyond the knowledge and intellectual perception of Jīva. Our belief and unbelief in this world are due merely to the fact that what we believe has been stated, and what we disbelieve has been denied, by a Śāstra, which is revealed and not of human origin. The point is this: the very Śāstra which says that Brahman has no name and no form also says, "From Brahman to a blade of grass everything in the world is the creation of māyā." If the practical existence of a thing could be done away with by the mere statement that it is the creation of māyā, why, then, does this world, consisting of moving and non-moving things, exist ?

The world is not a thing imperceptible to Jīva. If it is perfectly true that in the world created by māyā even a blade of grass can exist, we are unable to understand what it is which makes the existence of Brahmā in it impossible. If, by a far-fetched interpretation,[2] it is said that the root word Brahman here does not refer to fourheaded and red-coloured Brahmā possessing a body, there is an end of the matter. If even formless and attributeless Brahman becomes the creation of māyā and, consequently, false along with a blade of grass, then what remains as the true Brahman? To cut the branch of a tree on which one sits; to do away with formless Brahman in endeavouring to dispense with Brahman possessing form is a Kālidāsa[3] kind of intelligence which will produce an inevitable fall for the interpreter. In this connection we have nothing to say but to give a warning. It is on the authority of that Śāstra we say that Brahmā is included in the world, so that Brahma will exist so long as the world exists, or the world will exist so long as Brahmā exists. As the world is not false to you and me, in spite of its being the creation of māyā, so Brahmā and other Devatās also are not false to Sādhakas.

Thirdly, if, in spite of its being untenable according to reasoning, argument, and authority we were to accept the interpretation of the followers of the theory that Īśvara is formless

[1] Tattva. [2] Ādhyātmik, in the sense of untrue.

[3] Kālidāsa, the great poet, is said to have been in his early years such a fool in practical matters as to have attempted to cut down the branch of a tree whilst sitting on it.

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and to say that Brahman has really no name and form, then also there is no escape. If Brahman has no name and form, who is it, then, that says," Brahman has no name and form?" The speaker of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra is Sadāśiva and the person spoken to is Ādyāśakti, both being the Brahman with names and forms. Śāstra says: "Maheśvara has introduced the Tantras by means of questions and answers, Himself taking the places both of Guru (teacher) and Śiṣya (pupil)"—that is to say, in Āgama the Devī has put questions as disciple and Mahādeva has answered them as guru, and in Nigama Mahādeva Himself has asked questions as disciple, and the Devī has replied as Guru; or, in aspect inseparable from the Devī, the Deva Himself has, in both places, revealed the Tantras both as guru and pupil. If Brahman has no name and form, then this Deva and this Devī become false; and if the Deva and the Devī become false, how can the Tantra Śāstra remain true? Tantra is the most glorious of all Śāstras because it is the word of Mahādeva and Mahādevī. If to-day that Deva and Devī, the speakers of Tantra, turn out to be false, where then is the glory and authority of Tantra? If Tantra is not the command of Devatā it may be easily explained away as the mistaken word of man and, consequently, unworthy of respect. No one will then bow his head to the authority of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. If the follower of the theory of Brahman possessing no form says that he does not believe that Brahman has name and form, the follower of the theory of Brahman possessing form will instantly reply that he has no faith in the authority of Mahānirvāṇa Tantra. Thus all discussion and reasonings will cease, all interpretations will be useless, and all authorities and evidence will be of no value. I therefore say, where there is no means of defending one's own side, it is the height of folly to try to serve one's purpose by tricks.

Another thing. If in discussion a position of authority must be assigned to Śāstra everything which is said in it should be accepted as correct. If a sādhaka abandons the worship of images and takes to dhyāna and dhāraṇa alone, then the mental image formed by him in his mind becomes the object of his dhyāna and adoration. If an image imagined in the mind is supposed

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to be unable to give liberation, then there is no reason why dhyāna and dhāraṇa[1] without image worship should give it, because in that dhyāna also the sādhaka has to depend on a mental image. And if dhyāna does not bring liberation, then Devaṛṣis, Maharṣis, Rājaṛṣis,[2] Yogis and Munīs[3] are mere fools, who waste their days in useless labour. Accomplished great sādhakas also become deprived of siddhi. Moreover, why in that case should the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra have said: "The dhyānabhāva is the middle form of worship?" Who says that only the four ślokas of the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, referred to above, are worthy of being considered as authority and the rest of the book, consisting of two voluminous parts—Uttarakhāṇḍa and Pūrvakhāṇḍa—is erroneous? If this Tantra is correct, then the whole of it must be correct; if incorrect, then the whole of it must be incorrect. What sort of impartial judgment is it to consider only four ślokas which are to one's liking as correct and all the rest incorrect? I take out four palmfuls of water from the Ganges and consider that small quantity of water as Brahmamayī Gangā, who dwells in Brahmā's Kamaṇḍalu,[4] and all the rest of the stream flowing in an irresistible current from the Himalaya to the sea, as but ditch-water. What sort of faith is this? The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra deals with Varṇāśrama,[5] Yugadharma,[6] Yogatattva,[7] the six Cakras,[8] politics, Vyāvahāra dharma,[9] Sādhana dharma,[10] creation, preservation, and destruction, the divisions of the Brahmāṇḍa,[11] the fourteen worlds,[12] seven svargas,[12] and seven pātālas,[13] names, seats, and worships of Devas and Devis, the divya, vīra, and paśu forms of worship,[14] Mantras[13] and Yantras[13] of Devatās, the consecration of temples and images, the various

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[1] Meditation and concentration of mind (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[2] Classes of Ṛṣis, or seers. [3] Adepts in yoga and sages.
[4] A vessel carried by ascetics. [5] Caste system and rules.
[6] The peculiar characteristics and Dharma of the different ages.
[7] Science and art of Yoga.
[8] Centres in the body which are dealt with in works on Tāntrik yoga (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[9] Law. [10] Rules relating to Sādhana (*Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[11] Universe. [12] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*
[13] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*
[14] Suited to the three classes of men.

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kinds of liberation,[1] and with a whole mass of rules and regulations on various other subjects.

To consider the statements contained in the book on all these subjects to be incorrect with the exception of four ślokas, and these only subject to a wrong and perverse interpretation, is not judgment but treachery, intense selfishness, lawlessness,[2] or the raving of a madman. Everywhere the Sādhana dharma has been classified under the three distinct sections of Karma, Jñāna, and Bhakti, whether according to Tantra or Veda or Purāṇa.[3] According to this system Bhagavān has, in the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, given instructions in the Jñāna division after purification of the mind by performance of Karma. It is from these instructions, when handled by the senseless interpreters of the present day, that all this scepticism, by which nothing is gained but everything is lost, arises. Just as milk put into the mouth of a naturally venomous snake is turned into poison, so Śāstra, handled by selfish persons who are naturally faithless, gives rise to such scepticism. As a matter of fact, it is not the case that those who are determined thus to ruin the Āryan society by wrong interpretations of Śāstra are themselves unaware of their own treachery; but although they are aware of it the selfishness of the weak human heart prevents them from acting according to that knowledge. What they know remains within them, and what they try to make illiterate and foolish villagers understand is something quite different. Nowadays we can, in speaking of them, merely use the expression "double-tongued," one tongue being within and another without. But we can dare say that had an Āryan Prince now ruled the country the tongues of such interpreters would forthwith have been actually made double.[4]

Again: It is not to be wondered at that he should always speak ill of that, the excellent virtues of which he has no knowledge; just as a huntswoman throws away the pearl which is formed in the heads of elephants and adorns herself with a garland

[1] Mukti, which is not gained at one step.

[2] Svecchhā—that is, acting according to own will, and not according to law or rule.

[3] Action (including ritual), knowledge, and devotion.

[4] Their tongues would have been slit for their heresy.

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of berries,[1] Āryan poets have, therefore, said that such things should not be regretted, for what one has no power to comprehend one neglects but does not dishonour. "The nose alone smells the fragrance of Mallika and Mālātī flowers and not the eye." The eye does not, however, commit any offence thereby; it is merely devoid of the power of smelling. Similarly, should a person (who has yet to await many births before he acquires that Jñāna and Bhakti and purity of mind which befit one for the worship of images) say that worship of images is a mistake, he must not be understood to commit any offence or to deserve any punishment. In fact, he is an object of pity to the public, for Bhagavān has not yet granted him the power to comprehend the deep and solemn truth[2] relating to the worship of images of the Deity. It should be understood that although he is a mānava (man) in outward appearance, internally he is still imperfect in mānavatvā.[3] He is still a stranger in the human world only just elevated from the lower stratum of being. However that may be, wayfarers need to be warned before giving moral advice to a highway robber. All this argument should be postponed and first of all society should be warned. Fortunately, the robbers have, by their inopportune howling, made themselves known, and wayfarers have recognized their voice. The Āryan society has for some time discovered the hidden purpose of these interpretations of the Śāstra. The Mother of the world, the subduer of Daityas,[4] has appeared in the hearts of devotees and saved the world from these Daityas of Kali Yuga. At that part of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata where Bhagavān, the dispeller of the fear of existence, in dealing with sādhana dharma,[5] discusses with Uddhava, the Prince of devotees, the subject[6] of devotees, He says:

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[1] Gunjā, a red blackberry, used by goldsmiths in India as a small weight.

[2] Tattva.

[3] The proper state of a descendant of Manu or Humanity. As some one has remarked, the bulk of human beings now existing can only be said to be candidates for true humanity.

[4] Demons.

[5] The rules relating to Sādhana. For Dharma, see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

[6] *Lit:* "states the tattva."

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"Tīrthas[1] consisting of water are not such tīrthas; images of Devas made of earth and of stone are not such Devas as sādhus[2] are, for tīrthas consisting of water and images of Devas made of earth and stone purify sinners after long service and worship, whilst sādhus possess such wonderful power that their sight alone sanctifies Jīva."

"He who worships my image without (through illusion) knowing me, as Ātmā-Īśvara, the dweller in all things, merely pours oblations into ashes."[3]

The aforesaid healers consider these two ślokas also as evidence in favour of the theory of the Deity possessing no form. From the first śloka they glean that tīrthas consisting of water are not tīrthas at all, and images of Devas made of earth are not Devas at all. But, I ask, had it been so, why should it be said that they purify after a long time? By what power can a tīrtha which is not a tīrtha, and a Deva who is not a Deva, purify Jīva even after long service? When Bhagavān has said that they purify if they are long served, the śloka must be understood to mean that the power of purification which pious devotees possess is greater than that of tīrthas and images of Devatās. Purification by tīrthas and images of Devas depends on long service and worship by Jīva, but this is not needed to gain purification by the gracious look of devotees who freely dispense their mercy. We are confident that sādhakas will forgive the thieves who possess so little intelligence and cunning as to proceed to commit theft in the first and second parts of a verse, in the third of which they are detected.

Again, from the second śloka they have gathered that those who worship images instead of praying in this fashion, "Īśvara, who dwells in all things," merely pour oblations into ashes. We regret to say that the thought of this illustration in connection with such an illustrator induces us to smile as well as puts us to shame. Why do such men as have no faith in pūjā, japa, stava,

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[1] Places of pilgrimage, such as Kālīghāt, Gaya, Kāmākhyā, Pūrī, etc. The esoteric tīrthas are in the human body itself.

[2] Saintly men.

[3] That is, he does what is useless; for oblation should be poured into fire.

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and homa[1] make use of the illustration of pouring oblations into ashes? It is because oblations are actually poured into fire that the expression "pouring oblations into ashes" means the contrary thing. To pour oblations into fire is an act of worship towards an embodied Deity. If this worship of embodied Deity is itself a mistaken act, whence comes this illustration drawn from homa? However that may be, Bhagavān has said that whoever worships His image without the knowledge that He dwells in all things and is Ātmā and Īśvara, merely pours oblations into ashes, because without the knowledge that He is in all things, sentient as well as non-sentient, how can one believe in His existence in that image and in the possibility of the invocation of His life into it, and the like? In other words, whoever has not the knowledge that He is Brahman without distinctions is even totally unfit for image worship. The import of the śloka, therefore, comes to this, that without knowledge of Brahman, image-worship is of no avail; but by virtue of the pernicious influence of the present time it has come to mean that whoever worships images merely pours oblations into ashes. Great man! keep your interpretation to yourself. Do not, with an uncalled-for generosity, come forward to preach that to people which will make them as poor as street beggars. Do not, I pray, any longer create mischief in the name of interpretation.

[1] Worship, recitation, hymn and fire-sacrifice (homa) (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

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CHAPTER VII

WHAT IS ŚAKTI ?[1]

HERE, in the course of the present discussion, it has become necessary to decide a few points about Śakti-tattva. Whether because of the particular age we live in, or of sectarianism, there exist in Bengal a number of leaders, or pseudo-leaders, of the religious community who think and preach that they alone and a few other persons belonging to their community and holding their views are learned in all Śāstras, competent to pass judgment on all Tattvas and Dīkṣā-gurus of sādhakas[2] belonging to all communities. We know not by what curse of Bhagavan they consider it a great sin, for which there is no atonement, to believe that Bhagavān and Bhagavatī are one and the same being, nor why they look down with hatred and disgust, even as though their touch were polluting as that of hell-worms, on all persons who entertain such a belief. Such conduct by men towards their fellow-beings is not altogether impossible; but there is no escape for even Devatās, no pardon for even Īśvara, from them. A little inquiry in confidence will reveal to Sādhakas that in most places these people, being themselves Vaiṣṇavas, first worship Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and then offer to Śrī Rādhikā the articles already offered to Him. The reason for their doing so is that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who holds all Śakti, is Lord and Śrī Rādhika, who is Śakti Herself, is His handmaid, and that it is the duty of the handmaid to partake of the leavings of Her Lord's food, leavings which are tokens of His favour and, consequently, precious and particularly dear to Her. The honour of Rādhikā, however, is thus in a fashion maintained, because She is the companion or, at least, handmaid of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But the case of Gāyatrī,

[1] Śakti-tattva. Śakti is that which makes able, or that Power by virtue of which things happen or act (see *post*). That power belongs to, or more properly *is*, the Brahman, and is of various kinds, as to which see following pages.

[2] That, is, gurus who initiate: and other matters relating to sādhakas.

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who is single, is different. Had She been the companion of any Deva they could easily have included Her in the same class with Rādhikā; but Gāyatrī, the Mother of the three Vedas, and the progenitrix of the triad of Devas,[1] is no one's companion, and thus there is no opportunity to call Her anyone's handmaid. For this reason they have altogether abandoned Gāyatrī, considering Her to be "bare Śakti". Born in the line of Brahmā, these people yet think that it is a great sin to repeat Gāyatrī or even to admit that She is Brahman or Īśvara, and consider that it is improper to divulge to the public this intense secret devotion in the store of sādhana. It is only with a view to keeping up social and family custom and distinction of caste in the sight of others that Brāhmaṇa Purohitas[2] are called in, as a formal matter, to invest their children with the sacred thread.[3] If, unable to make time himself, the Purohita requests the father or grandfather of the invested boy to teach him Sandhyā[4] and Gāyatrī,[5] it is often found that the greatest difficulty arises.

Besides this, there are a few philosophical[6] pandits who say that worship of Śakti is not directly worship of Brahman. In their opinion such an inference is not even contrary to the teaching of Śāstra. They have decided that Ādyāśakti Mahāmāyā[7] is She who is called māyā[8] or avidyā[9] by the Vedānta. This māyā or avidyā is gross matter, something devoid of consciousness. It is only when Ātmā, who is consciousness itself, is reflected in Her that She appears to possess consciousness for Her work. For this reason these people say that He who possesses śakti is full of consciousness while śakti is gross matter. What, then, are those who worship gross matter instead of Brahman but gross matter themselves ?

Let us see whether this conclusion of theirs is approved of by the Śāstra. What the Tantra-śāstra has said about śakti

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[1] Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara. [2] Priests.
[3] At the upanayana ceremony.
[4] The prayers and ritual which go by that name (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[5] The mahāmantra of that name.
[6] Dārśaṇik. [7] The Devī as primal Śakti.
[8] Illusion (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[9] Ignorance (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

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we reserve for subsequent discussion. For those people firmly believe that the purpose of the Tantra Śāstra is to give predominance to śakti, and, consequently, evidence drawn from this source will not appear to be of much weight to them. For this reason we shall first of all quote evidence from the Śrīmad Bhāgavata. The following appears in the hymn to Śiva by Brahmā contained in the Chapter on Dakṣa's sacrifice in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata:

"I know that thou art the Īśvara (creator) of the universe. I know also that Thou art Parabrahman, in whom are inseparably united Śakti and Śiva, the womb (yoni) and the seed from which the universe is born. Bhagavān, it is Thou who dividest Thyself into the two forms of Śiva and Śakti, and, like a spider in play, dost create, preserve and destroy the universe."

Here Brahmā Himself says that Parabrahman is the non-differentiated substance[1] of Śiva and Śakti. He, therefore, has not embraced Brahmaism by omitting that part which consists of Śakti. Again, in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata, Bhagavān says to Uddhava:

"Prakṛti, the material of this universe, the supreme Puruṣa, its receptacle and Kāla (Time) its revealer—I am Brahman divided into these three parts."

In the Śrīmad Bhagavadgītā, Bhagavān says to Arjuna:

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, and reason also, and egoism[2]—these are the eightfold division of My nature.

"This the inferior. Know My other nature, the higher, the life-element, O mighty-armed ! by which the universe is upheld."[3]

Here Bhagavān first speaks of gross[4] Prakṛti, which is divided into eight parts, and then calls the Śakti, who is eternal consciousness[5] itself and gives life to all Jīvas, as His (Supreme)[6] prakṛti, thus dividing prakṛti into two main parts according as She is "gross" and "conscious".

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[1] Tattva. [2] Manas, buddhi, ahaṅkāra.
[3] Bhagavadgītā, chap. vii, verses 4 and 5.
[4] Jaḍa. [5] Caitanya. [6] Parāprakṛti.

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Again, "Brooding over nature (prakṛti) which is Mine own, I am born through My own Power (māyā)."[1]

Here, also, Bhagavān has differentiated between His own true prakṛti and māyā.

The following appears in the hymn to Śiva by Pūtātmā contained in the Kāśīkhāṇḍa of the Skanda Purāṇa:

"O Viśveśvara,[2] Thou art the universe itself. There is no difference between Thee and the universe, for Thou art omnipresent and the subject of praiseful hymn,[3] the maker of the hymn and even the hymn itself. Thou art both with and without attributes. Even yogīs are without spiritual perception of this truth concerning Thee, O Lord, who moveth as Thou willeth. She is Thy Śakti who appeared as an embodiment of Thy desire when Thou wert no longer able to enjoy Thyself alone. Though one in reality, Thou hast acquired a dual aspect according as Thou art Śiva and Śakti. Thou art Bhagavān, the embodiment of knowledge and desire is Thy Śakti. Thou in Thy twofold aspect of Śiva and Śakti, gave rise in Thy play to the Śakti of action, and from this Śakti of action has been generated this world. Thou Thyself art the embodiment of the Śakti of knowledge, Umā is the embodiment of the Śakti of desire, and this universe is the embodiment of the Śakti of action.[4] Thus Thou art the sole cause of the universe."

Again: "Thou as Prakṛti and Puruṣa first created the Brahmāṇḍa, and then inhabited it as all things moving and non-moving. Therefore, O Thou who pervadeth the whole world, nothing is different from Thee. All things exist in Thee, and Thou pervadeth all things." Vālmiki says in the Uttarakhāṇḍa of Adbhūta Rāmāyaṇa:

"Jānakī is primeval, eternal. She is the visible Prakṛti itself. Through Her, austerity is fruitful and heaven is gained. She

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[1] Bhagavadgītā, chap. iv, verse 6. A slight departure has been made from Mrs. Besant's translation in order not to differ from the author's Bengali version. Mrs. Besant's translation is: "Though brooding over nature, which is Mine own, yet I am born through my own Power."

[2] Lord of universe. [3] Stava.

[4] The three Śaktis—Jñāna (cognition), Icchhā (volition), Kriyā (motion).

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is the eternal vibhūti of vibhus.[1] It is that Mahāśakti whom Brahmavādīs[2] describe in the two forms of Vidyā and Avidyā. She is Riddhi;[3] Siddhi, full of guṇas, made of guṇas, and above guṇas. She exists as both Brahman and Brahmāṇḍa. She is the cause of all causes. She eternally plays as Prakṛti and Vikṛti.[4] She is full of consciousness, and blooms in consciousness. She exists in all things, is Brahman and Mahākuṇḍalinī. All this world, consisting of moving and non-moving things, is but Her play, O Brahman. Holding Her in their hearts, yogīs sever the heart's ties, and exist under their own true aspect. O Good Doer ! whenever dharma[5] becomes tarnished and adharma[6] flourishes, Mahāprakṛti appears through Her own māyā. Rāma also is the supreme light, the supreme abode, and the supreme Puruṣa in flesh and blood; for there is, in reality, no real difference between Sītā and Rāma. It is because sādhus have realized this that they have thrown off the slumber of māyā, awakened to the state of the knowledge of truth, and crossed from the jaws of death to the other side of the sea of samsāra. Rāma is incomprehensible, full of eternal consciousness, omniscient, omnipresent, the sole creator, preserver, and destroyer of all things, blissful and all pervading. Yogīs contemplate Him inseparably with Sītā. I shall truly, relate, by way of illustration, how, though in truth birthless, Prakṛti and Puruṣa, who exist in causal bodies, take high and wonderful births. Being in truth formless, They assume forms for the salvation of mankind and out of their mercy for it."

Again, when thousand-headed Rāvaṇa was killed by Sītā in the form of Kālikā, Rāmacandra said in his hymn to Her:

"Blessed is my birth to-day, and successful is my devotion; for, being unrevealed to the world, Thou hast favoured me by appearing to my view. All the world is Thy creation, and Pradhāna[7] and other Tattvas[8] are seated in Thee. At the time

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[1] Vibhūti is the thing which characterizes the higher nature. Vibhu is one who is all-pervading, and vibhūti is both that which it displays and the power by which it displays.

[2] Worshippers of the Brahman.

[3] Spiritual wealth.

[4] Freely rendered as "As cause and effect."

[5] Righteousness.

[6] Unrighteousness.

[7] The material cause.

[8] Its derivatives.

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of the great dissolution this world disappears in Thee. Thou art the highest goal of Jīva. Some speak of Thee as Prakṛti, different from Vikṛti, while, O Companion of Śiva, others of the spiritually wise describe you as Śiva, Pradhāna Puruṣa, Mahattattva, Brahmā, Īśvara, Avidyā, Niyati, Māyā and Kāla [1] and hundreds of other limbs emanate from and exist in Thee. Thou art the supreme Śakti, which is eternal and the highest good. Thou art free from all differences, and the shelter of all differences. Thou existeth as Thine own true Self, O Yogeśvarī, who art Parameśvarī. It is by entering into Thee Puruṣa makes and unmakes Pradhāna[2] and all other things of the world. It is by uniting with Thee that Puruṣa, the supreme Deva, enjoys the bliss of His Ownself. Thou art the supreme bliss and also the giver of supreme bliss. Thou art the supreme space, the supreme light, immaculate, Śiva, omnipresent, subtle, Parabrahman, and eternal."

The following appears in the Mahābhāgavata:

"I bow to the Devī, who grants heaven and liberation, by worshipping whom Viriñci[3] has become the creator, Hari[4] the preserver, and Girīśa[5] the destroyer, of this world; who is the object of contemplation by Yogīs, whom Munis possessed of spiritual knowkedge describe as the primal and supreme Prakṛti.

"May She preserve us[6] who on creating this world according to Her free will has taken birth in it, and receiving Śambhu for Her husband, and whose feet Śambhu placed on His breast when receiving Her for His wife as the fruit of His austerities."

Suta[7] said: "High minded Maharṣi Bhagavān Vyāsa the speaker of endless Dharmaśāstras, chief of all men, learned in the Vedas, and proficient in spiritual knowledge, received no satisfaction from his work in connection with the seventeen Purāṇas. He then bethought himself 'How shall I relate that

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[1] Śiva; the material and efficient cause; the Tattva Mahat, first of their issue; Creator; Lord; nescience; destiny; power of illusion and time. Niyati also is the Śaiva category of space.

[2] *Vide* last note. [3] Brahmā. [4] Viṣṇu. [5] Śiva.

[6] The author's rendering is free here. He writes: "May the creatrix of the universe who is worshipped by Śiva preserve the three worlds."

[7] Lomaharṣaṇā, the narrator.

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Mahāpurāṇa, than which no greater Purāṇa exists on earth, and wherein the supreme Bhagavatī is dealt with in all detail?' Failing to know the truth[1] about the Devī, his heart became agitated. He thought, 'How can that supreme and most abstruse truth[2] be known to me which is not known to even Maheśvara of vast knowledge?' So thinking and finding no other means, Vyāsa of great intelligence set his whole-hearted devotion[3] on Durgā, went to the Himālaya, and there practised severe austerities. The consort of Śiva, who is ever fond of Her devotees, was pleased with such devotion and, remaining unseen in the sky, said, 'Mahāmuni Vyāsa, go to Brahmaloka where all the Śrutis incarnate,[4] live; there you will know my stainless supreme existence.[2] There sung by the Śrutis, I shall become visible and do what is desired of by you." Hearing the message from above, Bhagavān Vedavyāsa at once repaired to Brahmaloka, bowed to the four Vedas and asked, "What is the supreme and undecaying Brahman?"

"Great Muni, hearing the Ṛṣi ask this question with modesty and submissiveness, the Vedas at once replied by turn."

Ṛgveda said: "In whom are contained all things, out of whom appear all things, and whom all describe as the highest Being,[2] that Ādyā (primal) Bhagavatī is Brahman itself."

Yajurveda said: "The Īśvarī who is worshipped in all yajñas and in yoga and for whose existence we (Vedas) are deemed the authority, that Bhagavatī alone is Brahman itself."

Sāmaveda said: "By whom this universe is moved, whom all yogīs contemplate, and by whose light the universe is manifested, that world-pervading Durgā alone is supreme Brahman."

Atharvaveda said: "The Īśvarī of Suras[5] whom all who are favoured for their devotion see, that Bhagavatī Durgā all Śāstras describe as Supreme Brahman."

Suta said, hearing the incarnate Śrutis thus express themselves: "Vyāsa, the son of Satyavatī, became certain that Bhagavatī Durga was supreme Brahman." After they had spoken

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[1] Tattva. [2] Tattva. [3] Bhakti.

[4] That is, the four Vedas incarnate (Mūrtimatī). Literally, "possessing form." [5] Devas and Devīs.

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as above mentioned, the Śrutis also again said unto the Mahāmuni: "What we have said we shall make directly visible to you." So saying, the Śrutis began to sing in praise of that Parameśvarī who is existence, consciousness, and bliss, who is pure, and who holds in Herself all Devas and Devis.

The Śrutis said: "Supreme universe-embracing Durga be pleased. The three Puruṣas[1] Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, are created with their individual guṇas according to Thy will for the threefold work of creation, preservation, and destruction. But, O Mother, Thou hast no creator in the three worlds. Who in the world can therefore describe Thy qualities, impenetrable by the intellect of Jīvas ?

"O Mother of the three worlds, it is by worshipping Thee that Hari destroys invincible Daityas and thus preserves the three worlds, and it was by holding Thy feet on His breast that Maheśvara was able to drink poison deadly enough to destroy the three worlds.[2] What can we say which will describe the force of that (incomprehensible) nature of Thine ?"

"We bow to Thee, O Mother who art the body, the consciousness, the Śakti of motion, and other Śaktis, and the highest Śakti, constituted of Thy own guṇas by the instrumentality of māyā of the supreme Puruṣa (Paramātmā), and Thou art She who residest as consciousness in the bodies of Jīvas, who, charmed by Thy māyā and with differentiating knowledge,[3] describe Thee as Puruṣa."

"Brahma-tattva is that aspect of Thine which is devoid of all distinctive conditions,[4] such as masculinity, femininity, etc. Next, Śakti is that primary desire of Thine which arose in Thee for creating the world. That Śakti appeared in one half as the supreme Puruṣa, so that both Prakṛti and Puruṣa are but Śakti in different forms. Both are but manifestations of Thy māyā.

[1] "Persons."

[2] At the churning of the ocean, poison was one of the things which issued from the waters. As this poison was powerful enough to destroy the worlds, Śiva drank it, holding it in His throat, which made it blue. Hence He is called Nīlakaṇṭha (blue-throated).

[3] Bhedajñāna; that is, knowledge distinguishing between Puruṣa and Prakṛti, who are, in reality and according to monistic knowledge, one.

[4] Upādhi.

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Even Parama-brahmatattva, therefore, is nothing but Thyself as Śakti."

"Just as to a searcher for truth things like hail formed of water and yet hard, are known to him to be water, so to an inquirer into the nature[1] of all things in this world which has its origin in Brahman, the latter has no separate existence from that of Śakti. Buddhi as Puruṣa, when realized as Śakti, also is Brahman; for Śakti is manifested Brahman."[2]

"The six Śivas, beginning with Brahmā, which exist in the six cakras in the body of the Jīva are, when considered separately from Thee, only pretas (that is to say, gross matter[3] in regard to their individual functions). It is only when they come under Thy protection that they attain Parameśvara-hood (that is to say, become Śivas under the influence of Śakti). So, O Śivé, Īśvara-hood is not in Śiva, but in Thee. O universe-pervading Devī Durgā, O Mother Whose lotus feet are worshipped by immortals, have mercy on us."

Suta said: "Thus sung, in a hymn by the incarnate Śrutis, the eternal Mother of the universe showed Herself to them."

"Although that Mahādevī exists as light (consciousness) in all living things yet She assumed a distinct body in order to dispel the doubts of Vyāsa."

"That body was of the brilliance of a thousand suns, and fair with the beauty of ten million moons. She had a thousand arms bearing celestial weapons, was decked with celestial ornaments and garments; smeared with celestial unguents, and seated on a lion. At times She was also seated on a corpse, and had four arms, and was of the colour of a freshly formed cloud. In this manner She appeared sometimes as two-armed, sometimes as four-armed, sometimes as ten-armed, sometimes as eighteen-armed, and sometimes as an hundred-armed. At times She appeared possessed of an infinite number of arms and of a sublimely divine form."

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[1] Tattva.

[2] If we realize Buddhi to be Śakti and Śakti is manifested Brahman, then Buddhi is such Brahman.

[3] Jaḍa.

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"Sometimes She appeared as Viṣṇu, with Lakṣmī on His left, at others as Śrī Kṛṣṇa with Rādhikā on His left; yet again as Brahmā, with Sarasvatī on His left, and then as Śiva, with Gaurī on His left."

"The all-pervading Devī who is Brahman in reality dispelled Vyāsa's doubts by thus assuming various forms."

Suta said: "Seeing all these wonderful forms of Jagadambā,[1] Vyāsa, the great Muni and son of Parāśara, knew the sublime Brahmatattva, and became free from the condition of a Jīva. Then, knowing the desire of Vyāsa, Devī Bhagavatī, the dweller in all hearts, showed him the thousand-petalled lotus lying under Her feet. In the petals of the lotus Vyasa, the great Ṛṣi, saw the great Purāṇa, named Mahābhāgavata, replete with sublime letters. Thus blessed, he praised the Devī in various ways, bowed to the earth before Her, and returned to his hermitage."

"He then disclosed the Mahābhāgavata Purāṇa, most sacred and full of sublime letters, just as he had found it in the thousand-pettalled lotus lying under the lotus feet of Jagadambā."[1]

Again, the following appears in the second chapter of the same book:

Nārada asked: "O Thou, the worshipped of the three worlds, chief of Devas and merciful to devotees, Thou art the greatest of those who know[2] the pure Ātmā and Brahman. O Parameśvara ! Thou alone knowest the nature of all things[3] O Lord of the universe. The other Devas and Ṛṣis know it not." "Thou (alone of all Devas) fondly holdest on Thy head Gangā,[4] who purifies the three worlds (because Thou knowest Her greatness). Thou hast made the moon Thy head[5] ornament (because Thou knowest its essential beauty). Tell me, therefore, O omnipresent Deva, that which I ask of Thee now. O Maheśvara, who is the Devatā whom Ye too worship ?"[6]

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[1] The mother of the world. [2] Jñānī.

[3] Vastu-tattva, the principle of all physical existence.

[4] Śiva called Gangādhara. "Whose coiled and matted hair is wet with the spray of Gangā" (Mahāniṛvāṇa Tantra, chap. i). When the River Ganges descended from Heaven, He intercepted it by His head, so that the earth might not be crushed by the weight of the falling stream.

[5] Śiva is represented as bearing the crescent moon. [6] Tattva.

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"Whoever worships Thee as well as Bhagavān Viṣṇu, and Brahmā, the Lord of the Universe, with devotion, attains to such a high state as it is in the power of none on earth to describe. Such being the more than worldly greatness of yourselves, I desire by all means to know the Devatā whom Ye too worship. Tell me, O Maheśvara, who is that Devatā."

Vyāsa said: "O great Muni Jaimini, hearing these words of Nārada, Mahādeva repeatedly revolved the matter in His mind, and then Mahādeva said: 'Great Ṛṣi, that which you desire to know is the highest and most abstruse truth.[1] My child, how can I reveal that unrevealable truth ?' "[1]

Vyāsa said: "Thus replied to by the Deva of Devas, Nārada stood, and, with folded hands, thus addressed Nārāyaṇa, the omnipresent Lord of the universe:

"Though very merciful to His devotees, Bhagavān Maheśvara, the Deva of Devās, is yet reluctant to say who is the Devatā He worships. Tell me therefore, O Thou Who art merciful to the supplicant, and chief of Devas, who that Devatā is."

Nārāyaṇa said: "Great Ṛṣi, what need have you to hear of that matter ?[1] We are your Devatas, and you will attain the highest state by worshipping us. What reason can you then have to know the Devatā We ourselves worship ?"

Vyāsa said: "Thus spoken to by Bhagavān Viṣṇu also, Nārada, the great Muni (finding no other means), thus prayed with folded hands and propitiatory words, to both Śiva and Viṣṇu."

Nārada said: "O Viśveśvara, the Deva of Devas, be gracious unto me; O Vāsudeva Nārāyana be gracious unto me.[2] O Śambhu, brilliant with the ornament of snakes, be gracious unto me. O Viṣṇu, decked with the kaustubha jewel, be gracious unto me. O merciful Gangādhara, O worshipful Deva, armed with the cakra,[3] be gracious unto me. Viśveśvara, naked as space, O Gadādhara, dressed in yellow, be gracious unto me. O Destroyer of Asura Tripura, I bow to Thee. O Destroyer of Asura Baka, I bow to Thee. O Destroyer of Asura Andhaka,

[1] Tattva. [2] Nārada prays alternately first to Śiva and then to Kṛṣṇa.
[3] Discus of Viṣṇu.

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I bow to Thee; O Destroyer of Asura Kamsa,[1] I bow to Thee. O five-headed Deva, riding on a bull, I bow to Thee. O Viṣṇu, seated on Garuḍa,[2] I bow to Thee."

Seeing Nārada, the great Devaṛṣī, thus engaged in prayer, Bhagavān Viṣṇu looked towards Deva Maheśvara and said:

Viṣṇu said: "Nārada, the son of Brahmā is devoted, wise and modest. Thou ought by all means to favour him, for Thou art gracious to devotees."

Vyāsa said: "Hearing these words of Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, too, who is ever gracious to the supplicant said, 'Be it so.' "

Then high-souled Nārada, possessed of pure knowledge, again questioned Mahādeva, the seat of mercy and Deva of Devas.

Nārada said: "It is by worshipping Thee, Viṣṇu and Brahmā, the Lord of the Universe, that Indra and other Lokapālas[3] have attained high states. O Chief of Devas, who is the perfect, immutable Devatā whom Ye worship ? Tell me this if Thou hast favour for me. If Thou wilt tell me by whose favour Ye have attained such high Īśvarahood, then shall I know that Thou art gracious unto me."

Vyāsa said: "Thus addressed, Bhagavān, high-souled Śaṅkara, the Lord of Yogīs, receiving Nārada's words in good grace, revolved all things[4] in His heart, repeatedly contemplated the lotus-feet of Śrī Durgā, and began to speak to Nārada the great Muni of the one perfect and supreme Brahman."

Mahādeva said: "She who is pure, eternal Mūlaprakṛti is Parabrahman itself and the Devatā We worship.

"That Maheśvarī is the sole Mistress[5] of the millions[6] of Brahmās, Viṣṇus, and Maheśvaras who are Lords of creation, preservation, and destruction, in different Brahmāṇḍas just as this Brahmā, this Janārdhana, and myself, Maheśvara, are the Lords of creation, preservation, and destruction in this

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[1] Demons, Tripura and Andhaka, slain by Śiva and the other two by Kṛṣṇa. [2] The king of birds, carrier of Viṣṇu.
[3] Regents of the quarters, Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirṛiti, and others.
[4] Tattva. [5] Vidhātrī.
[6] Crores. Each world system has its own Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva.

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Brahmāṇḍa. Though really formless, that Mahadevī assumes bodies in play. This entire universe has been created, is being maintained, and will, in the end, be destroyed by Her. And during its existence the world is overpowered by Her enchantment."

"In Her own play She, in former times, incarnated Herself in full[1] as the daughter of Dakṣa Prajāpati; She also incarnated Herself as Umā, daughter of Himālaya. In partial incarnation[2] She is the consort of Viṣṇu as Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, and the consort of Brahmā as Sāvitrī."

Nārada said: "Chief of Devas, if Thou art pleased with me, if Thou hast kindness for me, then, O Lord, tell me fully and in detail how that perfect Prakṛti formerly took birth as Dakṣa Prajapāti's daughter, and how Maheśvara obtained Her who is in truth Brahman for wife; again, how She took birth as Himālaya's daughter, and how three-eyed Mahādeva obtained that three-eyed Devī for His wife; and again, how that Mother of the universe gave birth to Her two sons, invincible and six-headed Kārtikeya and elephant-headed Gaṇeśa."

"Before creation this world was devoid of sun, moon, and stars, and without day and night. There was no distinction of directions. The Brahmāṇḍa was then destitute of sound, touch, and the like, etc., devoid of other force,[3] and full of darkness. Then but that one eternal Brahman of whom the Śrutis speak, and the Prakṛti, who is existence, consciousness, and bliss, alone existed."

"She is pure, full of knowledge, beyond the reach of speech, perpetual, immaculate, unapproachable by even yogīs, all-pervading, untroubled, eternally blissful, subtle, and devoid of all such properties as heaviness, lightness, and the like."

"Subsequently, when that Ānandamayī became desirous to create in order to manifest Her own play of bliss, that supreme Prakṛti, though in truth formless, at once assumed a form by the strength of Her own will.

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[1] Pūrṇa—that is, in such incarnation all the Vibhūtis (see *post*) of the Bhagavān are manifested, not so in partial (Āṇsik) incarnation.

[2] See last note. For as Brahmā and Viṣṇu are but partial manifestation of the Brahman, so are their Śaktis.

[3] Tejas.

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"That Devī with form was of the colour of crushed collyrium.[1] Her face was fair and as charming as a full-blown lotus. She had four arms, fiery eyes, dishevelled hair, and full and erect breasts.[2] She was naked as space, terrific, and seated on a lion.

"She then at once created, of Her own will, a Puruṣa (Mahākāla) with her three guṇas, sattva, rajas, and tamas. But the Puruṣa was even then devoid of consciousness."

"Seeing that Puruṣa made of three guṇas unconscious, She communicated to Him Her own desire for creation."

"Being thus possessed of Śakti through the communication of the desire of Mahāśakti, that Mūlapuruṣa[3] created with delight three Puruṣas, according to the threefold division of guṇas—namely, sattva, rajas, and tamas, and the three Puruṣas thus created were termed Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara."

"Still, when She saw that there was no sign of creation, the Devī divided that Mūlapuruṣa into two parts—namely, Jīva and Paramapuruṣa."

"Prakṛti also divided Herself, according to Her own will, into three parts—namely, Māyā, Vidyā, and Paramā."

"Of these Māyā is She who charms Jīvas and is the Śakti who creates the Samsāra. Paramā is the Śakti, full of consciousness and life, who is the cause of movements in Jīvas, and Vidyā is She who is made of pure spiritual knowledge and who is the Śakti which dissolves the samsāra."

Māyāvṛto hi jīvastāng paramāng nekṣate mune
Tābhyāng samāśritāstespi puruṣa viṣayaiṣiṇah
Babhūburmuniṣārddūla mugdhāstanmāyayā tadā
Sā tṛtīyā parā vidyā pañcadhā yābhavat svayam
Gangā durgā ca sāvitrī lakṣmīśchaiva sarasvatī
Sā prāha prakṛtirvidyā brahmavīṣṇumaheśvarān
Pratyakṣagā jagadhātrī viniyojya pṛthak
Sṛiṣṭyarthank puruṣā yūyang mayā sṛṣṭā nijecchhayā
Tatkuruṣva mahābhāgā yathecchha mama jāyate

[1] Añjana.

[2] The Devī is generally represented as so formed. They and other physical features are the signs of the Great Maternity. See passages cited in A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess".

[3] Primeval or root Puruṣa.

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Brahmā śrijatu bhūtāni śthāvarāṇi carāṇi ca
Vividhāni vicitrāni cāsamkhyeyāni samyatah
Viṣṇureṣa mahāvāhuh karotu pratipālanam
Nihatya jagatāng kṣobhakārakān valināng varah
Śivastamoguṇākrāntah śeṣe sarvamidang jagat
Nāṣayiṣyati nāṣecchhā yadā me sambhaviṣyati
Parasparañca sṛṣtyādikāryeṣu triṣu vaidhuvam
Vidhātavyang hi sāhāyyang yuṣmābhih puruṣatrayaih
Ahanca pañcadhā bhūtvā sāvitryādyā varānganāh
Bhavatām vanitā bhūtvā viharişye nijecchayā
Tathāngṣatasca sambhūya sarvajantuṣu yoṣitah
Prasaviṣyāmi bhūtāni vividhāni nijecchayā
Brahmangstvang mānasīng srṣting karotu mama ṣāsanāt
Sāmpratam nānyathā ṣṛṣtirvistṛteyam bhaviṣyati
Ityuktvā tanmahāvidya prakṛṭih sā parātparā
Svayamantardadhe teṣāng brahmādināca paṣyatām[1]

("O Muni ! overpowered by Māyā, Jīva does not see that Paramā. Subject to these two (Paramā and Māyā), O great Muni, those Puruṣas (Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva) also became at that time attached to the world, being influenced thereto by Māyā. The Third supreme Vidya is She who divided Herself into five forms—namely, Ganga, Durga, Sāvitri, Lakṣmī, and Sarasvatī. Addressing Herself to Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara separately, that Prakṛti Vidyā, the visible Jagaddhātrī (holder of the universe), said to them: 'You, Puruṣa, have been created by me of my own accord for the purpose of creation. O high-favoured Devās, do that which is my desire. Brahmā, do Thou create with care all things, movable and immovable, of various kinds, diversified and innumerable. Viṣṇu, this great-armed Deva, the best of the strong, do Thou maintain by destroying all such as oppress the worlds. Śiva, through the tamas guṇa, will in the end destroy all this world when the desire for destruction will arise in me. In these three works of creation and the like do you three Puruṣas render help to each other. I, too, will divide myself into five forms as Sāvitrī and other fair women,

[1] The author does not translate these verses, an English rendering of which is given in brackets below.

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and being your wives move as I desire. And becoming, with a part of myself, the female among all living things, I shall give birth to various beings of my own will. O Brahmā, do you, under my order, make a mental creation. At present no other creation should be made." Saying this to them, that Prakṛti Mahāvidya, who, is supreme over the supreme, Herself disappeared from the sight of Brahmā and the other Devas.")

The following appears in the second chapter of Devī Bhāgavata:

"The Paramā (supreme) Ādyā (primal) Śakti, who is called Vidyā according to Śruti, She who dwells in all things, resides in all hearts, destroys the bonds of samsāra, and is incomprehensible to the wicked; She who is ever visible to munis who meditate upon Her—may that Bhagavatī, whose substance is existence, consciousness, and bliss—grant a pious mind to Jīva."

"She who, after having created the universe as sat[1] and asat[2] and jaḍa[3] and caitanya,[4] maintains it by Her own śakti consisting of three guṇas; She who, again, at the end of the Kalpa, alone sinks in Self-bliss after destroying the manifestation of this universe—I remember that Mother of the Universe in my heart."

"It is generally known that Brahmā creates all this universe; but those who are acquainted with the Purāṇas and Vedas say that He took birth in the navel-lotus of Viṣṇu. They have thus indirectly said that Brahmā is not an independent Creator of the world for He, too, has had to be born elsewhere according to another's desire."

"For when in Mahāpralaya Viṣṇu lay on the bed of Ananta,[5] Brahmā appeared in His navel-lotus. Here, too, thousand-headed Ananta Deva supports Viṣṇu on His body. How can Bhagavān be said to possess independent Śakti when He has to depend on another for His support ?"

When in Mahāpralaya the world is converted into a single ocean the water of that single ocean is undoubtedly liquid. All

[1] True, permanent. [2] Untrue, transient.
[3] Gross, material, immovable.
[4] Consciousness, moving sentient life.
[5] The thousand-headed snake.

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admit that a liquid can never exist without a receptacle. But Viṣṇu supports Brahmā, Ananta Deva supports Viṣṇu, and the water of the ocean supports Ananta Deva; but who supports this mass of water ? Extremely difficult to understand is this matter. When, on carefully examining one receptacle after another, one comes to the end of all receptacles, then it is that there is disclosed the Supreme existence[1] of the Mahāśakti who supports all things. I make supplication to that Mother of all things.

"I make supplication to that Supreme Śakti, to that Devī to whom Brahmā, seated on the navel-lotus, prayed when (on the occasion of the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha) he saw Viṣṇu with His eyes shut in yoga-nidra."[2]

Again the following appears in the fourth chapter of the same book:

Suta said: "Thus, asked by Vyāsa, high-minded Nārada, proficient in the knowledge of Veda, spoke, with great delight."

Nārada said: "High-favoured son of Parāśara the matter which you ask me was, of yore, asked by my father, Brahmā, of Bhagavān Madhusūdana."[3]

"Seeing Harī, the chief of Devas, Lord of the world, and husband of Lakṣmī, rapt in meditation, my father was astonished and questioned that Vāsudeva, immersed in intense devotion, who is decked with the Kaustubha Jewel,[4] holds the conch-shell,[5] discus,[6] and mace,[7] bears the Śrivatsa[8] mark, and is dressed in yellow garments; He who is four-armed, the cause of all Lokās,[9] the Guru of the world, the Lord of the world, the Deva of Devas."

Brahmā said: "O Janārdana, Deva of Devas and Lord of the world, since Thou art Thyself the Īśvara[10] of past, future and present, why dost Thou perform austerity and devotion, and whom dost Thou contemplate ? This is a matter of great wonder to me. Being Thyself the Lord of all the world, yet

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[1] Tattva. [2] Sleep of Yoga.
[3] A name of Kṛṣṇa as the destroyer of Madhu, the demon.
[4] A gem secured by Viṣṇu at the churning of the ocean.
[5] Śaṅkha. [6] Cakra. [7] Gada.
[8] A patch of white hair on the breast of Viṣṇu.
[9] The fourteen regions. [10] Lord Ordainer.

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Thou contemplateth another. What, O chief of Devas, can be stranger than this ?

"Sprung from Thy navel-lotus I am Creator of this entire universe. Thou art the cause of all causes. What greater Devata can there be in this world than Thyself ? O husband of Lakṣmī ! tell me this."

"Lord of the world, I know that Thou art the first of all, the cause of all, the creator, preserver, and destroyer of all, the doer of all work, and the possessor of all Śaktis. Great King, I create this world according to Thy desire; and Hara, who destroys it at the time of dissolution, is also always guided by Thy words.

"Īśa,[1] it is under Thy orders that the sun travels in the sky, the wind blows auspiciously or inauspiciously, fire gives heat, and clouds pour rain.

"Being Īśvara of all, what Devata dost Thou contemplate ? This I cannot conceive; for as for myself I do not see a greater Devata than Thyself in the three worlds."

"O Noble-doer, I pray Thee, kindly tell me this, for Smṛti says that great people seldom make a secret of anything."

Hearing these words of Prajāpati,[2] Viṣṇu said: "Be attentive; I shall tell you that which I have in my mind."

"Although Devas, Asuras, and men know Thyself, Myself, and Mahādeva to be creator, preserver, and destroyer, yet Thou, versed in the Veda, know that it is through Śakti that Thou art creator, I am preserver, and Mahādeva is destroyer."[3]

"In Thee exists the Rājasī Śakti who brings forth the world, in Myself the Sāttvikī Śakti, who maintains the world, and in Mahārudra the Tāmasī Śakti, who destroys the world."

"Devoid of these Śaktis Thou art no longer Lord of creation, I am unable to maintain the world, and Mahādeva also is unable to destroy it."

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[1] Lord Ordainer. [2] Brahmā.

[3] And so the Kubjikā Tantra says that it is not Brahmā, but Brāhmī, who creates; it is not Viṣṇu, but Vaiṣṇavī, who preserves; it is not Rudra, but Rudrāṇī, who destroys. Their husbands are as inert as corpses.

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"Vibhu,[1] both directly and indirectly we are always subject to that Īśvarī of all. O Noble-doer, listen to an instance of this."

"It is true that in Mahāpralaya[2] I lie on Ananta as my couch, but even then I am certainly dependent; for subject to that Mahāśakti, I again awake at the proper time under the influence of Kāla."[3]

"It is under Her that I ever practise austerity and at times freely enjoy the company of Lakṣmī, and at times I am engaged in terrific wars with Dānavas—wars fearful to all Lokas and oppressive to the beings therein."

"Knower of Dharma, of yore, in that one ocean, I fought a hand to hand fight for five thousand years. You saw that with Your own eyes."

"It was through the grace of the Supreme Devī that I was able to kill the two wicked Dānavas, Madhu and Kaitabha, intoxicated by vanity and born of the dirt of my ears."

"Did You not perceive even then that the Śakti aspect alone, supreme over the supreme, is the cause of all action ? Great Soul, who do You, then repeatedly ask about the matter ?"

"She is the cause of all causes, created by whose will I, as Puruṣa, live in the one ocean and incarnate myself age after age as tortoise, boar, half-man and half-lion, dwarf, and the like."

"No one in the three worlds wishes to be born as a lower animal. I, too, did not of my own free will, take birth as a boar and as other lower animals."

"Who will willingly take birth as a fish or the like, forsaking the blissful company of Lakṣmī in Vaikuṇṭha ? What independent Puruṣa leaves a soft bed for the back of Garuḍa[4] and proceeds to wage formidable wars with invincible Daityās ?"

"O birthless Deva, in ancient time, when the bow-string slipped in your presence, my head was severed and thrown off, no one knew where. At that time You cut off the head of a

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[1] Omnipresent Deva.
[2] The great dissolution of things.
[3] Time.
[4] The Bird-king, vehicle (vāhana) of Viṣṇu.

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horse and had it attached to my body by Viśvakarma, the great artisan."[1]

"Since then I am known by the name of Hayagrīva, Lord of Lokas.[2] That incident You saw with Your own eyes. Had I been independent why should I have suffered so much trouble amongst the Lokas ?"[2]

"Know, therefore, that I am not independent, that I am in every way subject to Śakti, and that I always contemplate that great Śakti. Lotus-born Deva, I do not know of any truth[3] superior to this."

Narada said: "This was told by Viṣṇu to the lotus-born Deva. O great Muṇi, the lotus-born Deva subsequently told this truth[3] to me."

"Do you too, therefore, worship the lotus-feet of the Devī in your heart without misgiving for the attainment of your object."

Sādhaka, can anyone who has no bias as regards Śakti and no malice also as regards Viṣṇu, if chosen an arbiter, ever say, on seeing all this evidence drawn from the Śāstra, that he who considers Śakti to be devoid of consciousness[4] is a believer ? In all ages, and particularly in the Kali age, the career of religious revolution is indomitable. When Caitanya-deva[5] deluged all Bengal with huge waves of the name of Hari, he observed that Brāhmaṇa, Kṣattriya, and Vaiśya families were on the verge of ruin. He thought that in the then state of society full of Navaśākha Śūdras,[6] incompetent[7] for either the Vaidik or Tāntrik dharma, Harinām Samkīrtana[8] was the best Dharma, and consequently he preached that Dharma.

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[1] Hence Viṣṇu is called Hayagrīva (horse-faced one). The incident is related in Devī Bhāgavata. Viṣṇu fell asleep resting on his bow. Brahmā and others, wishing to awaken him, induced the white ants, called vamrīs, to bite through the bow-string. The mighty bow was released and cut off Viṣṇu's head, which was not found, and a horse's head was then joined to the body.

[2] The fourteen regions. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.* [3] Tattva.

[4] Jaḍa. [5] The Vaiṣṇava Saint of that name.

[6] Milkman, gardener, oilman, weaver, confectioner, betel-grower, potter, smith, and barber castes—middle-class Śūdras, as opposed both to the highest class Kāyasthas, etc., and the lowest cless.

[7] Adhikāra.

[8] Singing Harī's (Viṣṇu's) name with music and dancing.

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In those days, owing to the degeneration of Brāhmaṇas in a society full of Śūdras and of the lowest classes, such Purāṇas as Devī-bhāgavata, Mahābhāgavata, etc., in which the greatness of Śakti is established, ceased to be preached in Bengal. Moreover, owing to the steady increase of the lowest classes through the influence of the Kali age, only such Purāṇas and Śāstra as are favourable exclusively to the preaching of the name of Harī, and mainly and elaborately describe the greatness of Viṣṇu amongst all Devas and Devīs, began to be read, explained, recited, and so forth. Although the teachers[1] and Brāhmaṇas of the country proficient in Śāstra were in many cases worshippers of the Śakti Mantra, most of them were yet dependent on Śūdras for their living, so that in spite of their knowledge of the Śāstras in which the greatness of Śakti is established, they dared not bring them forward to the public notice for fear of thereby losing their means of livelihood.

Next, those who became Prabhus,[2] upon the spread throughout the country of branches and sub-branches of the Caitanya[3] community, have from generation to generation shown extreme partiality towards one part of the Śāstra, so that the inferences which they have drawn thereform touch only that part of the Śāstras, and are alone revered as essential truths within their own community. It is these one-sided inferences of the Prabhus which have brought ruin on Bengal. Ordinary Vaiṣṇavas have been given to understand that the Lord is the owner of Śakti and that Śakti is His servitress, so that they worship Rādhika with articles of food already offered to Śri Kṛṣṇa.[4] At the present time the book Caṇḍī, contained in the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa, which describes the greatness of the Devī, is commonly taken to be the Śāstra in which Śakti stands supreme. The Prabhus, quoting it as their authority, say that as one of the names of Śakti is Viṣṇumāyā, she must therefore be a great Vaiṣṇavī.[5] It is thus because Śakti is considered to be a great

[1] Adhyāpakas.
[2] Gossains, or religious preceptors of Vaiṣṇavas.
[3] The Vaiṣṇava Saint of that name.
[4] Literally, leavings of food partaken by Śrī Kṛṣṇa.
[5] Worshipper of Viṣṇu.

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Vaiṣṇavī, that modern Vaiṣṇavas do Śiva the favour of taking Him for a "Spiritual brother". Let Bhagavān judge their conduct. Here we shall merely discuss the Śāstrik evidence, on which the notion that Bhagavatī is a great Vaiṣṇavī is based.

It has been said in Caṇḍi:

"Under the influence of the Mahāmāyā of Bhagavān, who preserves the samsāra, Jīvas fall into the pit of illusion,[1] with its eddies of 'mineness'."[2]

Do not, therefore, be astonished at this. Mahāmāyā is the Yoganidrā[3] of Harī, the Lord of the universe, and it is by Her that this world is charmed.

"That Devī Bhagavati Mahāmāyā forcibly draws the mental faculties of even the wise and gives them over to illusion."[4]

By Her is created this world, consisting of things moving and non-moving, and She alone, when so pleased, is the dispenser of blessings and gives salvation to Jīva.

"That eternal (Supreme) Vidyā[5] is both the cause of salvation, and the cause of Jīvas' bondage in Samsāra. She is the Īśvarī of the Īśvaras of all."[6]

The Vaiṣṇava Prabhus here say that the two adjectival expressions, "The Yoganidrā of the Lord of the Universe" and "The Mahāmāyā of Harī," prove beyond doubt the subordination of Mahāmāyā or Śākti to Harī, otherwise, "Why, they argue, "should Śāstra call Her the Mahāmāyā of Harī or the Yoganidra of the Lord of the Universe?" What is known through another is surely subordinate to that other; as, for instance, expressions such as man's sleep, man's intelligence, and man's power indicate sleep, intelligence, and power as subordinate to man.

We shall subsequently refer to the Śāstrik interpretations and inferences regarding the points at issue. Here it is merely necessary to understand whether Bhagavān's Yoganidrā is a thing similar to your or my nidra.[7] Assuming, for argument,

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[1] Moha. [2] Mamatā (egoism). [3] Sleep of Yoga of Īśvara.

[4] Moha; and so also the Kālikā Purāṇa states that the Devī leads men into confusion, egoism, sensual desire, etc. She is the bewilderer (sarva-mohinī), (Lalitā Sahasranāma, verse 137), bewildering the world with Her māyā (Kūrma Purāṇa). [5] The Devī (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[6] Lord of all Lords. [7] Sleep.

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that Yoganidrā is nothing but the nidrāśakti[1] subordinate to Bhagavān: the question still remains, why, in the chapter relating to the destruction of Madhu and Kaitabha, and in which the power of Yoganidrā has been described, Brahmā, seated on the navel-lotus of Bhagavān, is said to have prayed to Nidra instead of to Viṣṇu for Viṣṇu's awakening ? Who is there in the world so foolish as to pray to sleep, a thing unconscious, instead of the sleeping conscious person for his awakening ? Again, the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha by Bhagavān redounds to the glory of Bhagavān alone. But why, when about to relate the greatness of Śakti in the Caṇḍi, does Mārkaṇḍeya, the great Ṛṣi, first of all speak of the greatness of Viṣṇu as illustrated by the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha ?

We deem it a sin even to believe that anything said by the great Ṛṣi, Mārkaṇḍeya, can be tainted with the fault of superfluity. What, then, is the right solution of these questions ? Some interpreters of the Caṇḍī have, with the object of arriving at that solution, devised forced meanings of the ślokas concerned, and by their means endeavoured to establish the greatness of Śakti. But we say that a solution arrived at through forced meanings of the words of Śastra can never be a right solution. Again, what danger has there appeared which is so great that the unsuspecting world must be deceived with forced interpretations of the words of Śāstra ? What does it matter to you or to me if, according to Śāstra, Viṣṇu becomes supreme and Śakti His subordinate ? In reality, what the interpreters consider to be a danger is none at all, but rather a blessing. None can become subordinate or supreme. What one is, one remains. Only you and I, through the perversity of our intellects, ascribe to Devatas the states of superiority and subordination to which we ourselves are subject, and, being thus unable to perceive the subtle Śāstrik truth,[2] we go down to perdition. The Śakti-tattva made of māyā, with which you and I are acquainted, is not the same thing as the Śakti-tattva superior to māyā which belongs to Bhagavān. The sleep consisting of delusion[3] and

[1] Power of sleep. [2] Tattva. [3] Moha.

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māyā, which we know of, is not the same thing as Bhagavān's sleep, which consists of constant consciousness. Just as you and I are overpowered by sleep, so your and my sleep is also corrupted by the corruption of non-conscious gross matter.[1] But when Bhagavān is overpowered by sleep, His yoganidrā is that great Śakti which is ever awake and full of light.[2] When a Jīva sleeps his imperfect sleep, another can awaken him by any means; for any sharp contact with sound, touch, etc., causes the Jīvas' senses to ruffle the imperfect power of sleep and to awaken him by his own consciousness; thus you and I can awaken a sleeping person by calling or pushing him.

But not so with Bhagavān. He possesses all śaktis. No śakti in Him is imperfect. For this reason, while Jīva's sleep is sleep, Īśvara's sleep is yoganidrā. Your and my māyā is called simply māyā. But this māyā is called yoga-māyā. You or I can, at the utmost, be a yogī, but Bhagavān is the Īśvara of all yogas, and so His Śakti is Īśvarī of the Īśvara of all yogas. A Jīva can rarely acquire an infinitesimal part of that śakti by dint of yoga, but that śakti is eternally present in Bhagavān. Jīva is imperfect; so Jīva's śakti also is imperfect. Bhagavān is perfect; so His Śakti also is perfect. Jīva is constituted mainly of the inert[1] principle; and so Jīva's śakti is also predominated by the same principle. Bhagavān is made of consciousness; so His Śakti also is made of consciousness. Your or my śakti of sleep is constituted of the inert principle, but Bhagavān's Śakti of sleep is constituted of the conscious principle.

Even when He is asleep, He remains awake; for while your or my sleep is merely constituted of the tamas guṇa, His sleep is superior to tamas guṇa, although constituted of it. For this reason, at the time of the great dissolution[3] the Mother of the universe assumes the aspect of sleep; and, taking on Her lap all Her sons and daughters from Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara downwards, inhabiting the innumerable crores of Brahmāṇḍas, She puts them all to sleep. But She who is existence, consciousness, and bliss, and supports the universe, Herself remains awake.

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[1] Jaḍa. [2] Jyotih. [3] Mahāpralaya.

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When, after a whole day's play, the son stands before the mother in the evening, with a weary body, she at once takes him on her lap and removes the weariness by putting him to sleep. It is this subject[1] which has been so well depicted in the illuminating story of the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha. After the great dissolution[2] when the world remains immersed in the one ocean, Bhagavān sleeps in Yoganidrā to the close of ages, shutting his eyes and lying on Ananta in the midst of that mass of water which deluges the Brahmāṇḍas.

Viṣṇu is the preserver of the world. Whom will He preserve when the great dissolution[2] is accomplished ? When there will be creation again, then there will be necessity for preservation. The long period intervening is the time for Viṣṇu's rest. Viṣṇu plays till the arrival of the great dissolution and instantly the son's play is ended the Mother lays Him on the bed of rest and puts him to deep sleep. Unlike other mothers, She has to make no effort in order to put the son to sleep. The universe-pervading Devī is Herself in one aspect sleep. In proper time She appears in that aspect, and lays Bhagavān on Her lap. He cannot, therefore, be awakened by being called like other sleeping persons. He can rise only when the Devī, who appears as sleep, frees Him from Her own tāmasik bonds. When, therefore, Bhagavān Brahmā failed to break Viṣṇu's sleep by all manner of prayer, entreaty, etc., He understood that that sleep, which was in reality consciousness, was not ordinary sleep. Perceiving that the mercy of Yoganidrā, the Mother of the world, could alone save Him, He began to praise Her. From the very fact that all the prayers, entreaties, loud calls, and the like, of Brahmā, with His four mouths, could not break Viṣṇu's sleep, it must be understood that sleep was not subordinate to Viṣṇu, but Viṣṇu was subordinate to sleep. Had it been Viṣṇu's sleep, it would have been easily broken; but it was sleep's Viṣṇu, and therefore the sleep did not break.

Again, in the place where Bhagavān is described as being tired with fighting with Madhu and Kaitabha, Śāstra says:

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"Charmed by Mahāmāyā those two Daityas, maddened with the pride of their great strength, requested Keśava[1] to ask for some blessing from them." What kind of thing was that charming by Mahāmāyā ? The Caṇḍi does not particularly relate when and how She charmed the Asuras, and why the two Daityas also all at once asked Bhagavān to seek a blessing from them. In fact, although the greatness of the Devī has been described in the Caṇḍi, the description is very short. We cannot, therefore, get a correct answer to these intricate questions from the Caṇḍī itself. For this reason we shall quote from the Devī-Bhāgavata the relevant portions of the account which it gives of the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha. Seekers of truth will know from them the deep mystery which surrounds the story of the killing of Madhu and Kaitabha and free their minds from doubts.

When, after having performed severe austerities for a thousand years, and having received, on that account, the blessing of death-at-will[2] from the Devī, Madhu and Kaitabha advanced to fight with Brahmā in order to wrest from Him His lotus-seat, Brahmā prayed to Viṣṇu in great fear but failed to awaken Him. Here Śāstra says:

"Seeing that all His prayers were of no avail in awakening Bhagavān Hari, who was lying under the influence of Yoganidrā, Brahmā thought to himself that Viṣṇu was surely sleeping under the influence of that Mahāśakti. What will my sorrow avail, when the Founder of Dharma[3] Himself will not awake at this crisis of Adharma ?[4]

"The two Dānavas, puffed up with pride, have come with the object of killing me. What shall I do—where shall I go ? There is none to save me." Revolving this in His mind, Brahma, decided and resolved to pray to Yoganidrā with unswerving devotion. He considered in His mind that in the insurmountable danger which faced Him at the time, Mahāśakti alone could save Him; that Mahāśakti, under whose influence even Viṣṇu,

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[1] Viṣṇu.
[2] Death only when desired.
[3] Righteousness.
[4] Unrighteousness.

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whose substance was eternal consciousness, lay deprived of the power of movement.

"Just as a dead man does not perceive sound and other qualities of the things of the world, so Hari also, with eyes closed in sleep, does not perceive the prayers that I am making to Him." When, in spite of my many and earnest prayers, He does not shake off His sleep, I know of a certainty that sleep is not under His control, but that He is under the control of sleep. He who is under the control of another is surely that other's servant. This Yoganidrā is, therefore, mistress over even Bhagavān Hari, husband of Lakṣmī.

(It is not only that Bhagavān Viṣṇu is under the power of Parameśvarī in Her full aspect, but He is also under the power of Her partial incarnation.) "He is always bound in love to even Lakṣmī, the daughter of Ocean, and under Her control."

"It is therefore certain that Bhagavatī, in Her aspect of Śakti, thus holds the entire universe under Her control. There is not the least doubt that myself, Viṣṇu, Śambhu, Sāvitrī, Ramā, and Umā—everyone of us—is under the control of that Īśvarī of all: under whose influence even Bhagavān Hari sleeps like an ordinary mortal without control over His limbs. What wonder, then, that under Her influence all other great persons should remain charmed ? I shall to-day please, by means of prayers, that Yoganidrā by whom, when released, Janārdana Vāsudeva[1] will engage in war." Having thus determined, Bhagavān Brahmā began to pray, from His place on the stem of Viṣṇu's navel-lotus, to Yoganidrā in Nārāyaṇa's body.

Brahmā said: "Mother, all that the Vedas say has taught me that Thou, O Devī, art the sole cause of this phenomenal world; wherefore even Puruṣottama[2] Viṣṇu, who awakens all worlds, is to-day lying asleep under Thy influence. Dweller in all things, Mother, Thou art above guṇas. Who is so wise amongst the millions of Devas as to certainly know that which is the free play of illusion caused by Thee ? I am in every way ignorant in the matter, and Nārāyaṇa here sleeps without control over Himself. The person whom followers of the Sāmkhya

[1] Viṣṇu.

[2] The best of Puruṣas.

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Philosophy call Puruṣa, whose substance is consciousness, is admitted by them to be also Prakṛti, the Creatrix of the world devoid of consciousness.[1] Art Thou really such Prakṛti ? Otherwise, why should Nārāyaṇa, the seat of all consciousness in the world, be to-day made unconscious by Thee ? (Unless the Mother be unconscious, how can She bear the sight of such misery of Her son ?) Bhavānī, with Thy guṇas, Thou art making all manner of play.[2] Who has the power to know the process of this yoga of creation practised by Thee whom munis thrice daily contemplate under the name Sandhyā with all guṇas ? Mother, Thou art intelligence, which is the source of all knowledge in the three worlds. Devī, Thou art Lakṣmī, who ever grants happiness to Suras,[3] and glory (intelligence, patience, beauty, reverence) and love in the hearts of all beings in the three worlds.[4] Thinking even in a hundred ways on the present state of my sorrow and suffering, I find nothing more strongly proved than this, that Thou art the Genetrix of all the world; otherwise who but the Mother of Brahmā and others, and the Genetrix of the Brahmāṇḍa, can put to sleep the son who is all full of Brahmān ?[5] Devī, withdraw Thyself from the limbs of Nārāyaṇa and assume a wonderful form. Sportful as Thou art, like a child (Thy sport is sport of will like that of children) Thou canst do whatever Thou likest. Do Thou kill me or these two Daityas. And if Thou wilt not kill them Thyself, awaken Hari, who, when awake, will kill them. Whether Thou Thyself killest or by means of Viṣṇu, in both cases the work will be Thine alone."

Sūta said: "Thus prayed to by Brahmā in the waters of the one ocean that Devī whose substance was the tamas guṇa[6] with-

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[1] The Sāmkhya distinguishes between Puruṣa and Prakṛti. But probably Brahmā, the speaker, here means to say that Prakṛti and Puruṣa are really one, and not two, and it is that one whom the Sāmkhya Philosophy sees in two aspects, at one time as full of consciousness, and again as devoid of consciousness.

[2] Nātya. [3] Devas.

[4] And so also the *Gītā* says: Kīrttih śrīrvāk ca nārīnām smṛitir-medhā dhṛitih kṣamā.

[5] The son all full of Brahman is Viṣṇu under the influence of yoganidrā. Brahmā is here saying that this Yoganidrā must be the mother of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, for who but this mother can put Viṣṇu to sleep ? The Mother alone can put the son to sleep. [6] Sleep.

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drew Herself from all the limbs of Viṣṇu of incomparable brilliance, in order to destroy the two Daityas. Assuming a charming form, She stood beside Bhagavān. Upon the Devī withdrawing Herself from Bhagavān's body, it moved. Seeing Nārāyaṇa regaining consciousness, Vidhāta[1] was greatly satisfied."

Again, the following appears in the eighth chapter in connection with the fight with Madhu and Kaitabha:

"When full five thousand years had passed in the fight, Nārāyaṇa bethought himself how their death might be caused. 'Five thousand years have I fought. It is a wonder to me that although I feel tired, these formidable Dānavas are not at all wearied. Where are gone my strength and prowess in this fight ? And why do they fully retain their strength ? What is the cause of this ? Let me think upon it.' Seeing Nārāyaṇa thus immersed in thought, the two Daityas, intoxicated with vanity, became overwhelmed with joy, and said, with voices deep as the rumbling of clouds:

" 'Viṣṇu, if you have no strength left in you, if the fight has wearied you out, join the palms of your hands, and, putting them on your head, say: "Surely do I become your slave." Otherwise, if you are capable, fight with us, so that we may first kill you, and next this four-headed one.' "

Sūta said: "Hearing these words spoken by them in that vast ocean, Viṣṇu, of mighty intellect, and wise to conciliate, gently spoke."

Hari said: "It is the Sanātana Dharma[2] of heroes not to strike anyone who is wearied or is afraid, or has given up arms, or has fallen down, or is young in age. Besides this, for five thousand years I have fought singly with you two brothers, who are both equally powerful. You have alternately taken rest. But from beginning to end I have fought singly, so that I shall first take as much rest as you have done, and then fight with you. Although you are strong and intoxicated with pride, you are in justice bound to wait so long as I take my rest. And after rest I too shall, as in justice bound, engage in fight with you."

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[1] Brahmā.

[2] The immutable duty.

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Sūta said: "Hearing these words uttered by Bhagavān, the two Dānavas became assured, and, being resolved on fighting, sat at a distance from the field of battle. Seeing the Daityas sitting at a considerable distance, Vāsudeva began to think to himself how their death might be caused. In meditation Bhagavān, the Dweller in all things, came to know that Devī had given them the blessing of death-at-will, and, consequently, the hard labour of fighting could not weary them. He thought: Uselessly have I fought so long, useless has become my labour, and now that I have for certain known the truth, how can I fight with them? But if I do not fight, how will these two Dānavas, puffed up with the blessing which they have received, and who are the source of constant trouble to Devas, be destroyed ? The blessing which Bhagavatī has granted to them is but little likely to be fulfilled; for even they who have most cause for grief do not willingly court death.[1] When even the diseased and poverty-stricken do not desire to die, why should these two Asuras, in the intoxication of pride, court death willingly ? However that may be, I shall today seek the protection of Mahāvidyā who is Śakti and fulfiller of all desires; for, unless She is pleased, no desire can be fulfilled." As He thus thought, Bhagavān Viṣṇu saw Yoganidrā, the consort of Śiva, appear in a charming form in the sky. Thereupon, almighty Nārāyaṇa, the master of yoga, began to pray with joined hands to that Īśvarī of the world, the dispenser of blessings, for the destruction of the two Asuras.

Viṣṇu said: "I bow to Thee, O Devī, Caṇḍī Mahāmāya, Thou who hast no beginning and no end, who dost create, preserve, and destroy, who grantest both enjoyment and salvation, and who art the consort of Śiva. Devī, I know neither your form with attributes,[2] nor your attributeless[3] aspect.

"How can I, therefore, know the innumerable forms under which Thou appearest ? Although it is impossible for me to gauge your power, this much at least I know, that I slept and was

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[1] The blessing is death-at-will, and as no one desires death there is no likelihood of this blessing being fulfilled—that is to say, of their death, which depends on their will, occurring.

[2] Saguṇa.

[3] Nirguṇa.

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unconscious under Thy influence. I could not awaken, though repeatedly and assiduously summoned by Brahmā. Mother, because my five senses of knowledge, and my mind, contracted under Thy influence, I became wholly unconscious. I awoke only when I was released by Thee, and after that I have fought much. This long fight has tired me, but failed to tire these two Asuras whom your blessing has made great heroes. When the Dānavas, intoxicated with pride, came to kill Brahmā, I challenged them in fight in any fashion they might choose. Since then I have fought hard with them in this vast ocean.

"But, O Giver of honour, who can dishonour those whom Thou hast honoured ? When, after five thousand years of fight, I saw that they neither desisted nor were tired, then I came to know that Thou hadst granted them a wonderful blessing in the matter of death. Knowing this, I seek the protection of Her who protects all who are helpless. Mother, in the long fight I have become tired. O Destroyer of the foes of Devas, help me in the work of the Devas. Through haughtiness caused by the blessing granted by Thee, the two Asuras, who are incarnations of sin, have now become ready to kill me. Mother, what shall I do now, where shall I go (but seek Thy protection in this great peril) ?" Thus addressed, the Devī smiled, and said to the bowing Lord of the world: "Vāsudeva, these two heroes can be deceived and then killed. Nārāyaṇa, I shall charm them with arch glances. Thus charmed by my māyā you shall, O Nārāyaṇa, soon destroy them."

Sūta said: "Hearing these loving words of the Devī, Bhagavān reappeared in the field of battle in the midst of that vast ocean. Then, those two composed and mightily powerful heroes came to the same place and were delighted to see that Viṣṇu had already arrived there. They said: 'O high-aspiring one, stay (we are two-armed), but you are four-armed. Still take the field of battle, knowing for certain that victory and defeat depend on fate. The strong ever win, but the weak also do sometimes win by chance. Wise persons should, therefore, indulge in neither joy nor grief in these matters. Enemy of Dānavas, many

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Daityas have, in former times, been defeated by Thee. But now, fighting with us, you are defeated."

Sūta said: "Seeing that the two long-armed Dānavas who had thus spoken were prepared for fight, Viṣṇu, with wondrous skill, dealt blows on them with his fists. They also, intoxicated by their great strength, began to strike Bhagavān with their fists. Thus they waged terrible war with each other. Seeing the powerful Dānavas thus engaged in fighting, Nārāyaṇa, with a pained look, cast his gaze upon the Devī's face."

Sūta said: "Seeing Viṣṇu thus looking pained and pitiable, the Devī (whose three eyes were like the morning sun) deeply reddened them, and, glancing at the two Asuras, laughed. Then, smiling softly, she pierced their hearts with arch glances, which spoke of feelings of love and desire, and were as the five arrows of Kāma.[1] Sorely struck by the arrows of desire, the two sinful Dānavas, thinking that the arch glances of the Devī meant favour to them, were charmed. They stood motionless, regarding the transparent beauty of the Devī. Viṣṇu, too, who knows the purpose of every action, understood the Devī's object, and perceiving that the Dānavas were charmed, smiled and sweetly said, with a voice which sounded like the rumbling of clouds: 'Heroes, I have been much pleased with your fighting. Ask for any blessing which you may desire and I shall grant it. Formerly, I have seen many Dānavas fighting; but I have neither seen nor heard of any Dānava who can fight as you have done. I am, therefore, greatly pleased at the incomparable strength of arms possessed by you two brothers, and am ready to grant you any blessing which you may desire."

Sūta said: "The two Daityas, who were overcome by lust, at the sight of Mahāmāyā, in whom all the world find delight, said, their vanity being wounded by Viṣṇu's words: 'Hari, what is it that you desire to give us ? We are not beggars, rather we are ready to give to you. Know us to be givers and not beggars. Hṛṣīkeśa,[2] ask for whatever blessing you may desire. Vāsudeva, we too have been pleased with your admirable fighting.' Hearing these words, Janārdana[2] said in reply: 'If you have been

[1] Deva of Love. [2] Viṣṇu.

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pleased, grant me to-day this blessing that you be killed by me."

Sūta said: "Hearing these words of Viṣṇu the two Dānavas became extremely astonished and, thinking themselves to have been deceived, were grieved at heart. Then, seeing all the world full of water and destitute of land, they bethought themselves, and said to Viṣṇu: 'Lord of Devas, Janārdana Hari, you are truthful, therefore grant us now the blessing desired of us, which you promised us but a while ago; kill us in some extensive place where there is no water. We have kept our promise by being willing to be killed by you, and now you too keep your promise and be truthful.' Remembering His Sudarśana cakra,[1] Bhagavan Viṣṇu smiled and said: 'High-favoured Dānavas, I accept your proposal, and shall kill you in an extensive place where there is no water.' So saying, the Lord of Devas extended His thighs and displayed them as a waterless place above the waters of that vast ocean, saying to the two Dānavas: 'Here there is no water; lay your heads upon them so that I may keep my word and you too may keep yours.' Hearing these words of Bhagavān in keeping with His promise, the two Daityas devised a plan in their minds and extended their bodies to an extent of one thousand yojanas[2] each. Seeing this, Bhagavān also extended His thighs to double those dimensions. Madhu and Kaitabha were astonished at seeing such inconceivable power of māyā possessed by Nārāyaṇa, in whom all māyā is seated, and laid their heads on the two wonderfully extended thighs of Bhagavān. Thereupon, Viṣṇu of great prowess, rapidly severed with His Sudarśana cakra, the great heads of the two Daityas lying upon His thighs. Thus the two Daityas died, and the mass of fat which was emitted from their bodies covered the whole surface of the ocean. Because of this, the earth is everywhere known as medinī, and for the same reason (that is to say) because formed in mixture with that mass of fat soil is unfit for eating.

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[1] Sudarśana is the name of the weapon (cakra or discus) of Viṣṇu and means of good appearance.

[2] A yojana is about eight miles.

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"Great Munis, what you asked me I have related truly and precisely. Wise men should worship Mahāmāyā, who is also Mahāvidyā. She is Paramā Śakti, whom Suras and Asura and all worship. There is no truth[1] higher than this in the three worlds. This is the truth, the truth, and the truth again. This is the spiritual truth which the Veda Śāstra establishes. Worshipful is that Paramā Śakti, whether in Her form with attributes or in Her attributeless aspect."

[1] Tattva.

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CHAPTER VIII

WHAT IS ŚAKTI ? (*Contd.*)

In the case of the ordinary followers of the theories that Śakti is unconscious or that She is a great Vaiṣṇavī, we entrust judgement upon their opinions to the Sādhakas of these communities respectively.[1] Let them consider whether the above two classes adopt their respective conclusions because there is Śāstrik evidence in their support, or because of their inability to enter into the deep and weighty truth which the Śāstra reveals in the ślokas above quoted, or because they have not seen or heard of all this Śāstrik evidence, or lastly because, even if they have so seen or heard it, they do not, through vanity, care to take note of it. The above-quoted Śāstrik evidence proves that Śakti-tattva is divided into two parts—first, māyāśakti, that is, Śakti whose substance is guṇas, and second, citśakti, which is above guṇas and is massive bliss. By māyāśakti has this vast and variegated drama of samsāra been composed. In this drama citśakti appears as Puruṣa and Prakṛti who, though free from all attachment in their real aspects, as Jīvas perform this vast Brahmāṇḍa play. Giving birth to all things from Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, to the minutest insect, and spreading the manifestations[2] of Herself both as gross and intelligent substance,[3] She pervades the world. If you and I were to understand the Mother's māyā, which charms the minds of even munīs, with whom will that Ānandamayī play the play of the unconscious world ? Blind man ! should you be proud of your philosophical knowledge ? False ḍevotee ! If, in spite of your being an enemy of Śāktas,[4] you deem yourself to be a learned

[1] That is, the Sādhakas of the same communities to which these theorists belong are a superior order of men, not likely to be swayed by such foolish ideas. To their judgement, therefore, the question may be safely left. The theorists are those who form the bulk of the Nāstika and Vaiṣṇava communities. Nāstika as here used means a person who thinks that Śakti is unconscious.

[2] Vibhūti. [3] Jaḍa and Caitanya. [4] Worshippers of Śakti.

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devotee, it is not the glory of the Śāstra which will be in any way dimmed, but it is you who will be liable to punishment. You and I may hate or be malicious towards Śāktas and yet not consider ourselves sinners, but Hiraṇyagarbha Brahmā[1] becomes a Śākta, and says:

"O Thou who art all things, how canst Thy greatness be hymned[2] when Thou art the Śakti in everything, asat or sat,[3] which is anywhere in the world ? Who can hymn Thee by whom even Bhagavān, the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the world, has been overcome through sleep ? From Thee, Viṣṇu, Myself, and Īśāna[4] have derived our bodies. Who is, therefore, capable of making hymn to Thee who art the origin of even Brahmā and others ? Devī of unspeakable power, Thy own vast powers be praised: and do Thou charm these two indomitable Asuras, Madhu and Kaiṭabha."

Again, Viṣṇu says: "Devī, I know not any form in which Thou appeareth, be it with attributes or attributeless. How, then, can I know the innumerable aspects of Her of whose form even I am ignorant ?"

After the war with Mahiṣāsura, all Devas, descendants of Devas, and Maharṣis[5] stood before Kātyāyanī, who visibly appeared to them, and said:

"We bow with reverence to the lotus feet, worshipped of all Devas and Maharṣis, of the Mother who has assumed form by the withdrawal of all the Śaktis from the bodies of Devas, and who has, by Her own Śakti, created this world consisting of things moving and non-moving. May She grant us good things ! May Caṇḍikā, whose incomparable power and strength even Bhagavān, Ananta, Brahmā, and Maheśvara are unable to describe, resolve to maintain all this world and destroy pernicious fear ! Mother of the world ! Thou art the cause of all this world, but still Thou containeth three guṇas. From Brahmā to Brahmāṇḍa everything is covered with these guṇas so that

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[1] Brahmā, who sprang from the effulgent or golden womb.

[2] Stava or hymn in which the powers and doings of the Deity adored are lauded.

[3] That is, jaḍa or caitanya (*ante*). [4] Śiva. [5] Great Ṛṣis.

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not even Hari, Hara, and others are able to penetrate this covering and know Thy true reality. For Thy greatness is unfathomable. Thou art the shelter of all things. All this world is derived from a part[1] of Thee and yet Thou art above this world. Thou art unchanged,[2] primal, Supreme Prakṛti."

Advocate of the theory that Śakti is unconscious gross matter or force![3] O man! blundering Jīva as you are, will not your tongue become void of strength before it enounces your conclusions that that Śakti is unconscious[2] whose nature even Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara have described to be indefinable and beyond the reach of mind and speech? By constantly thinking of Prakṛti-tattva as "Prakṛti of the world" your mind has become void of understanding,[4] and so to-day you dare call Mahāprakṛti gross unconscious matter,[5] who is Herself existence, consciousness, and bliss. But have you ever considered Prakṛti-tattva in the light that "the world is of Prakṛti" instead of Prakṛti being of the world? Had you done that you would not have fallen into such a gross blunder as to the true nature of Prakṛti. Leaving aside philosophical theorems,[6] if your knowledge extends to even the root meanings of words I ask you, do the expressions "Prakṛta-tattva" and "Prakṛta-tathyam"[7] which you are wont to use, signify things false? Or do they signify things true? If the meaning of Prakṛta be "not true", what will you call Vikṛta?[8] In the Samsāra there are two things; one, Prakṛti, and another Vikṛti. That which is instinct with Prakṛti is Prakṛta, and the rest Vikṛta. Leaving out of consideration differences of gender due to suffixes, Prakṛti and prakāra[9] are one and the same thing. What is one's svarūpa[10] is one's prakāra; as, for instance, the expression "Of what prakāra is such and such a thing?" means "What is its svarūpa?" Svarūpa is nothing but another name for

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[1] That is, God, though in the world, is yet more than the world.

[2] Avikṛtā: that is, Prakṛti in the state in which no vikāra (change) has occurred as opposed to the evolving state of Prakṛti.

[3] Jaḍa. [4] Lit.: "become jaḍa."

[5] Jaḍa. [6] Tattva. [7] Real truth.

[8] Untrue; that which is changed, transformed, or, as it is some times said, corrupted. [9] Kind; nature.

[10] Own form; what a thing or person really is. The thing or person in itself or himself.

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Prakṛti. For this reason, to explain a thing as what it is, an idea of its Prakṛti has to be given. In common parlance, therefore, what is a thing's Prakṛti is called that thing's svabhāva.[1] Analyzing the word svabhāva we get sva, signifying self, and bhāva, signifying substance,[2] Svarūpa, Prakṛti, or Śakti. In conclusion, therefore, that which is the Svarūpa of Self is svabhāva or Prakṛti. Now, tell me, O philosophical advocate of the theory that Śakti is unconscious,[3] is Brahman's Brahmahood, Śakti, Prakṛti, or Svarūpa false? If not, on what authority do you call Śakti unconscious?[3] Brahman of eternal consciousness is, as you say, truth in substance.[4] Unless Śakti be false, it can never be separate from Brahman who is truth in substance; and unless it be something separate from Brahman, who is all consciousness, it can never be called unconscious.[3] The ultimate conclusion, therefore, of this theory is that it is the svarūpa tattva of Brahman who is all consciousness which is unconscious.[3] Philosopher! praised be your knowledge of Śakti! Wonderful is your faith in the Supreme! It is from seeing and hearing all this that a Sādhaka has said: "Who knows that Kālī, the darśana[5] of whom the six Darśanas[6] do not obtain?"

It is by trying to understand Prakṛti-tattva, according to the notion that "Prakṛti is of the world," that Cārvākas[7] have become sceptics. Different is the method of understanding for the faithful.

The faithful will understand that Prakṛti is not of the world, but the world is of Prakṛti.

The expression "Prakṛti of the world" conveys no idea to a man; for the world is of infinite extent and destined to last till the end of the Kalpa,[8] while the longest stretch of longevity for man is one lakh of years.[9] And he, although superior to all other worldly Jīvas, is yet liable to mistakes and blunders. The only wealth of man is his little intelligence and he is, moreover, oppressed by hunger and thirst, boyhood, youth and age, disease,

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[1] Own nature. [2] Sattva.
[3] Jaḍa. [4] Satyasvarūpa. [5] Sight. [6] Systems of Philosophy.
[7] Followers of the athiest Cārvāka.
[8] See *post*. [9] 100,000.

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sorrow, and fear. For man to judge of the substance of the Brahmāṇḍa is tantamount to the acquisition of a thorough knowledge of the sea by a shallow-water fish (that is to say, both are equally impossible). An Āryan Sādhaka desiring to understand the Prakṛti-tattva of the world will have to become a slave of the Mother of the world instead of the world itself. He must adore Her world-embracing form by seeing Her reflection in the mirror of the Śāstra. He must form an idea of the appearance of the son by seeing the appearance of the mother; to know the truth[1] concerning the Brahmāṇḍa by sinking into the self of Brahmamayī. Those who have known the matter in this fashion have earned immortality in mortal life and laid down their lives as an offering to the lotus-feet of Parameśvarī! To say that Prakṛti is of the world first of all gives rise to the suspicion, in an ordinary mind, that if the world be nothing else than a composition of the five elements,[2] then Īśvara, Devatā, Brahmā, Prakṛti, or Śakti—in short, nothing superior to guṇas, māyā, and the world—can exist; for Prakṛti is then what the world is. Thus scepticism slowly appears in the field, and to a sceptic's eye the samsāra appears full of only such things as are perceptible to the senses.[3] But if, with the vision of the faithful, it is realized that "the world is of Prakṛti," no danger of such doubts exists, for whether made of five elements, or unconscious (whatever the world may be), there is no possibility of such qualities being necessarily attached to the self of Prakṛti, because of the mere fact of Her being known through the world. It is not necessary that the mother's body should resemble the son's body limb per limb. On the contrary, there must be some resemblance of the mother in the son. Similarly, whether the Mother of the world has anything in Her of the world or not, the world has surely some śakti of the Mother in it. This is the method of understanding for those who are subject to differentiating knowledge,[4] although, according to the spiritual vision of adepts in spiritual science,[1] there is no difference between the world and the Mother of the world. Again, to know the world merely in relation to

[1] Tattva.
[2] Bhūtas; elements—earth, air, water, fire, ether.
[3] Pratyakṣa.
[4] Bhedajñāna, *vide ante*.

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itself we have to know the world and the world's śakti, but to know the world in relation to the Mother of the world, we have to know the world, the world's śakti, and the great Śakti superior to the world. Although I am imperfect in the world, the Mother of the world is perfect, eternal Brahman. Consequently in order to know Her I must rise above the imperfect existence of the imperfect world and reach that most perfect existence in which all things besides Herself are imperfect and yet all such imperfect things are full of Her perfection. For this reason Āryan worshippers, the best of faithful men, are averse to respect imperfect knowledge at the cost of a disregard for perfection, or to discuss created things in disregard of the supreme subject for our thought—the Creatrix of the Creator of all created things.

Another thing. It is indeed a terrible mystery that you should, through perceiving the visible world to be unconscious,[1] have come to think that the great Śakti who has created that world is also so. If you consider the world to be unconscious,[1] I do not want to dispute the matter with you for the present; but I wish to know on what authority you consider the Śakti who works the world to be unconscious.[1] On the one hand, philosophers say that "although the Śakti of the world is unconscious[1] it appears as conscious owing to the reflection of the Śakti of consciousness[2] in it." On the other hand, Brahma himself says: "Thou art the Śakti in everything, asat (jaḍa) or sat (Caitanya)."[3] In each of these statements both the states of śakti have been demonstrated but with this difference, that while philosophers say that it appears as conscious on account of its reflecting consciousness thrown upon it, Brahmā says that it seems to be unconscious[1] because unconsciousness appears in it (otherwise nothing is so).[4] According to philosophers, the Śakti of the world is in reality unconscious, but appears as conscious because it reflects the Śakti of consciousness; and according

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[1] Jaḍa. [2] Cit.

[3] That is, in gross and intelligent substance.

[4] That is, asat: that is otherwise nothing in the world would be unconscious.

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to Brahmā, the Śakti of the world is in reality conscious, but seems to be unconscious because that state appears in it.[1]

Now, whether the Śakti of the world reflects consciousness or unconsciousness, each of these views admits the existence of both consciousness and unconsciousness at least in the ordinary state of things, if not in the state of spiritual vision. It is admitted on all hands in the community of the faithful that unconsciousness[2] has come out of consciousness,[3] and that the Śakti of the world has its origin in the Śakti of consciousness. "The world is all full of Brahman." "One alone exists and no second." "The world is all full of Vāsudeva." "The universe is all full of Śiva and Śakti." "There is no difference between Thee and the universe." "Hari is the world and the world is Hari." "When Hari is both within and without, what is the use of performing austerities?" If all these great sayings of the Śāstra be true, if He alone exists and no second thing, whence have come this unconscious[2] world and the Śakti of the world? In reply to this question, it must either be said that the world and the Śakti of the world are the Brahmavibhūtis[4] of that great Śakti, or that the world and the Śakti of the world have no existence. Otherwise, the singleness of Brahman or Śakti cannot be maintained. It can by no means be said that the world does not exist and again it is not the view of the Ārya Śāstra that anything besides and second to Brahman exists. It must, therefore, be said that the world, the Śakti of the world, or whatever else they may be, all are nothing but the pure display[5] of that great Śakti; or, in other words, nothing really exists but the Śakti of consciousness.[6] All which is seen as unconscious matter in the world, full of māyā, although it appears to be true, is not in reality so, but is only a display of error.[7] Again, that error itself is a manifestation[5] of Brahmaśakti and that manifestation[5] is called māyā.

[1] The meaning of these passages is as follows: Brahmā has said that Śakti is in everything, conscious and unconscious. On the next page it is said that unconsciousness is a false or māyik manifestation. Hence it follows that Śakti is in reality conscious, but sometimes appears as unconscious on account of the play of Māyā in it, and which Māyā also is itself nothing but a peculiar aspect of Śakti. Thus unconsciousness is but a māyik phase of conscious Śakti, and in this sense a thing which really exists; otherwise Brahmā's word that Śakti is in unconscious things is meaningsless.

[2] Jaḍa. [3] Caitanya. [4] Brahma manifestations (see *post*).
[5] Vibhūti (see *post*). [6] Citśakti. [7] Bhrānti.

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Of that māyā, consisting of three guṇas, the part in which the rajas and tamas guṇas predominate is called avidya; the state which includes everything from pure sattva guṇa to the attributeless Brahman is called vidyā; in that vidyā again, She who is turīya śakti above all,[1] and whose substance is pure bliss, is called Mahāvidyā. Overpowered with joy in love for Her who is pure existence, consciousness and bliss, the ever-joyful Īśvara of all has said in the Cāmuṇḍa Tantra:

"Kālī and Tārā are Mahāvidyās; Ṣoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Chhinnamastā, and Dhūmāvatī are vidyās; Bagalā, Mātangī and Kamalā are Siddhavidyās." These ten Mahāśaktis are Mahāvidyās, Vidyās, and Siddhavidyās in order. That is to say, in these ten Mahāśaktis which embody perfect manifestations of the Śaktitattva must be sought the harmonious setting forth of Mahāvidyās, Vidyās, and Siddhavidyās, in the above order. This is the meaning of the above quotation as it appears from the wording of the Ślokas. In the Śyāmā-Rahasya, however, all the ten Śaktis have been called Mahāvidyās. "Kālī, Tārā, Ṣoḍaśī, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Chhinnamastā, Mātangī, Kamalā, Dhūmāvatī, and Bagalā are called Mahāvidyās." In another place of the same treatise it has been said: "In the Kalī age Siddhi in all the Mahāvidyās is the best." Here the word "all," which expresses combination, and the use of the plural number, signify that all the ten are called Mahāvidyās. Besides this, in the Viśvasāra Tantra it has been clearly stated that "Mahāvidyā is preceded by the prefix mahā." For this reason all Tāntrik teachers are of opinion that in the last line—"etā daśa mahāvidyāh siddhavidyāh prakīrtitāh"—of the above quotation from the Cāmuṇḍā Tantra all the ten have been indirectly called by the general names of mahāvidyā and siddhavidyā. Hence, according to Viśvasāra Tantra, Kālī and Tarā are Mahāmahā-siddhavidyās, Ṣoḍaśi, Bhuvaneśvarī, Bhairavī, Chhinnamastā, and Dhūmāvatī are Mahāsiddhavidyās, and Bagalā, Mātangī, and Kamalā are Siddhamahāsiddhavidyās.

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[1] Literally, "above all Tattva".

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In the Chapter on the play of Śakti, we shall attempt to show, so far as it will lie in our power, what appearances of massive Bliss they have in the aspect of turīya consciousness. At present we shall discuss, according to Śāstra, whether She is māyā or māyā is Hers.

The Mother's name is Mahāmāyā, and this, too, is a mahā (great) māyā of Hers. Blinded by this Māyā pandits of unripe intelligence fall into the pit of erroneous inferences, and losing themselves in it, think that māyā is nothing but the material of the gross unconscious[1] world and that She, too, is māyā by whom that māyā is held, and who is primal, eternal, and perfect Brahman. If She too is māyā, then why has She the name Mahāmāya? If māyā and the person possessing māyā are one and the same thing, if the seed and the tree are one and the same thing, then why should there be difference of conditions of names and aspects? In fact, wherever Śāstra has made mention of that Mahāśakti, with reference to the part of Her which is māyā, it has given Her the name of Mahāmāyā; and again, wherever it has made mention of Her with reference to Her Brahma-aspect, there also it has called Her Mahāmāyā. In both places the root-word mahat is the adjective of māyā with this difference that in the place where reference is made to māyā the samsāsa[2] is Karmadhāraya[3]—that is to say, She who is mahatī (great) māyā is Mahāmāyā, while in the place where reference is made to the Brahma-aspect the samāsa is Bahubṛīhi[4]—that is to say, She who has mahatī (great) māyā is Mahāmāyā. Just as the larva of a silkworm is both the instrumental and the material cause of the production of thread—instrumental because threads are produced by its will, and material because they are produced from its body—so Mahāśakti is both the instrument and the material cause of the work of the world. She is the instrumental cause because, being will itself, She has willed to create the world in Her blissful true resolve, and She is the material cause because She has spread māyā which is her own vibhūti,[5] and out of it fashioned all things both moving and non-moving.

[1] Jaḍa. [2] Compound. [3] Descriptive.
[4] Possessive. [5] Manifestation.

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That instrumental aspect is Śakti or Brahman, and this material aspect is Māyā.

In the process of creation also, in the body of the Jīva, the Brahma-aspect is Ātma and the Māyā aspect is antahkaraṇa.[1] In the illustration of the larva of the silkworm itself there appears another phase of māyā. Imprisoned in the web of threads produced by itself, which it thinks belongs to itself, it remains for some time bound by them and yet does not feel itself to be so. In course of time its aspect undergoes a change under that covering of threads, and after a while that very larva assumes the form of a butterfly, rends the sheath formed of its own threads, and with its sublimely beautiful body flies forth, spreading its fine and transparent wings in the infinite sky, in perfect bliss, with an unfettered life and a free heart, leaving behind on earth only its rent sheath of threads. Similarly, the māyā aspect, mind, which is bound by the self-created threads of samsāra and is attracted to and crushed by that samsāra, controls, by means of self-restraint, all affection, attraction, and attachment of and to the samsāra, and is even while confined in the womb of samsāra, absorbed in the thought of the beauteous lotus-feet of Her who holds the universe in Her womb and dwells in the heart of Viśveśvara. Thus absorbed, its form changes of itself, unknown to the three worlds; then, in the fullness of time, it rends, with its own strength, the māyā-sheath of samsāra. Blessed with the merciful regard of the Charmer of Mahākāla[2] and dispeller of the fear of death, it spreads its two wings of discrimination[3] and dispassion,[4] and taking with it the brilliant and shining Ātmā which then forms its body, the pure and sāttvika māyā, which is mind, becomes a Prajāpati (Lord of the Universe through Śakti). As Vidyā[5] it rises above the universe and soars high in the infinite expanse of heaven towards the seat of existence, consciousness and bliss, which belongs to Mahāvidyā. The flame of the forest fire is lost in the orb of the sun; lightning shot

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[1] Mind, etc. (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*). [2] The Devī.
[3] Viveka, the power to distinguish the real and the unreal.
[4] Vairāgya, indifference to worldly things.
[5] Spiritual knowledge; as the soul which knows (*vide post*).

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from its region is lost in the body of the cloud of massive bliss.[1] The broken cage of mind—that is to say, the body composed of five elements—is alone left behind in the samsāra.

It is this phase of māyā consisting of spiritual knowledge which is called vidyā. By virtue of this vidyā one reaches Her, the Mahāvidyā, who is adored of all the world, and is the object of sādhana. Sādhaka, he alone in the world has acquired useful knowledge whose knowledge is employed not to earn worldly riches, but spiritual wealth or Mahāvidyā. In this vast sea of samsāra he alone is past master of the art of sailing across the world who has moored his vessel in the port of Kulakuṇḍalinī. Thus, O Sādhaka, the Mother is yours. Am I, then, motherless? Have I no mother, although the three worlds have their mother? Say then, O Mother, that you are the Sādhaka's Mother. Extremely ignorant and devoid of siddhi and sādhana as I am, what will become of me? Although a son of Mahāvidya, I have, O Mother, been blinded and benighted by deep avidyā.[2]

What, then, will be my fate? This vessel of mine is drifting down the stream of samsāra with the ebb of pravṛtti[3] I cannot hold it back; I have not the power to stay it with nivṛtti.[4] Nay, Mother, the vessel is unable even to drift on any longer. It is a small craft, and has moreover, nine openings in it.[5] The sea has, by constantly breaking over it, filled it with its salt waters, and has left not even standing-room. Now I shall sink, and that not to rise. Daughter of the earth's supporter,[6] hold me, hold me, O Mother, There is no strength left in these my weak arms. Extend for once, O Mother, your two hands of blessing and assurance.[7] Merciful Mother, turn once and look at me. My Mother, in this vast sea this witless, helpless child of yours has none else whom he can call his own. O Mother, Mother Kula-kuṇḍalinī, be a mother and take me up once into your

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[1] Ānandaghana.
[2] Ignorance.
[3] The path of desire. See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*
[4] Cessation of desire.
[5] The vessel is the body. The nine openings are the two eyes, the two ears, the two nostrils, the mouth, the genitals, and the anus.
[6] Dharādhara, the mountain.
[7] The Devī's hands make the mudrās, vara and abhaya.

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bosom. Let this vessel sink for good.[1] The Śāstra says that you are Mahāvidyā, because you can be reached through vidyā. But, I ask, how are you Mahāvidyā unless you can save the child of yours who is destitute of vidyā? Through my vidyā I sink.[2] Now through your vidyā save me, and prove that you are rightly called Mahāvidyā. Let the vanity which this sinner entertains of having acquired vidyā, such a vidyā as has led to his downfall, be destroyed. Glory to you, Mother Mahāvidyā! Whether I have the power or not, you are the wealth which the world seeks in sādhana.

Sādhaka, just as mental Śakti, which is manifested māyā, is called vidyā when it becomes free from the bonds of samsāra and rushes towards the Mahāśakti with dishevelled hair; so it is called avidyā when it forgets Her and is intoxicated by the things of the world—wife, children, and the like. In this connection we may cite the following from the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa:

"That Devī Bhagavatī Mahāmāyā forcibly draws the mental faculties of even the wise, and gives them over to delusion. By Her is created all the world, consisting of things moving and non-moving, and She alone, the dispenser of blessings, when pleased, grants salvation to Jīva. That eternal supreme Vidyā is the cause of liberation. She, again, is the cause of Jīva's bondage in samsāra. She is the Īśvari of all Īśvaras."

Again: "King! although eternal, that Devī Bhagavatī incarnates Herself again and again in the manner aforesaid, and maintains the world. By Her is this universe deluded, and She gives birth to the universe. If pleased, She grants wealth and knowledge to all who beg it of Her. Lord of men! at the time of the great Dissolution[3] this entire universe is pervaded by that Mahākālī in the form of a great destructive power.[4] She it is who at times appears as a destructive power; She it is who again appears as the creation; and, again, it is that unborn eternal

[1] That is, let the vessel sink for good so that it may not have to struggle again on the surface of the worldly ocean of samsāra. Let it sink in Her bosom where there is no such struggle.

[2] This vidyā is "*my* vidyā" which is really avidya.

[3] Mahāpralaya.

[4] Mahāmārī, which generally means a great plague.

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Devī who at times preserves all things. In prosperity She is Lakṣmī in the houses of men, granting increase. In adversity She becomes Alakṣmī for their ruin. (Here it may be objected, why, then, worship Her, if, according to men's lot, She appears as Lakṣmī and Alakṣmī in prosperity and adversity in order to do service or disservice to them? In answer to this question the following is said): When duly prayed to and worshipped with flowers, incense and the like, She grants wealth, progeny, and other things to the Sādhaka who desires such things, and beneficial attachment to dharma[1] to him who does not desire them."

Again, in the following Chapter it is said: "Oh King, I have thus related to you the greatness of the Devi, which is the best of all things which man can relate. So wonderful is the power of the Devī who supports the world. Even as She holds the world under the spell of māyāmoha,[2] so also the same Bhagavatī Viṣṇu-māyā provides it with vidyā.[3] That māyā has deluded and deludes you, this, Vaiśya, and all other people who have the faculty of discrimination,[4] and will delude all such people born in future. Great King, seek the protection of that Parameśvarī. Being worshipped, She grants worldly happiness, heaven,[5] and liberation[6] to men." Here too, the Ṛṣi has in view two aspects of Śakti. In relation to the bondage of samsāra, He speaks of the māyā aspect, and, again, for liberation from that bondage he points out the Brahma-aspect for worship, and says: "Seek the protection of Parameśvarī." "She alone, the Dispenser of blessings, grants liberation to Jīva when pleased." "O Devī, a spell of delusion spreads over all this world. Being pleased, Thou alone in the world can grant liberation."

It is when the Mother of the world, in the aspect of māyā, appears as the deluder of the world that She assumes various forms, the variety of which is due to differences in sattva, rajas,

[1] Duty, religion (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[2] The delusion which is caused by māyā.
[3] Spiritual knowledge.
[4] Literally, "possessing viveka". This is ordinary discrimination which distinguishes one thing from another in the common world of appearance, as, for instance, happiness from sorrow, and not the higher form of discrimination, which distinguishes the "real" from that which appears to be such.
[5] Svarga. [6] Mukti.

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and tamas guṇas in them, and it is then that She plays the Acts and the Scenes of the drama of Samsāra. Such forms are intelligence, sleep, hunger, chhāya,[1] power, thirst, forbearance, caste and class, shame, peace, reverence, beauty, wealth, function,[2] memory, mercy, contentment (inclination), error, intellect, earth, nourishment, brilliance, restraint, and other innumerable śaktis. At the root of all these forms lies She who is eternal consciousness, and who, again, is, as māyā, known in the three worlds by the name of Viṣṇu-māyā. It is a sight fit only for the divine vision of Devas. When, therefore, through fear of Śumbha and Niśumbha, they began to worship Her who dwells in the heart of Śambhu, they first of all showed that She was the Ordainer of the universe as māyā, and then made prayer to Her by calling Her "Saviour". So at the beginning of the hymn it is said:

"To the Devī who is Viṣṇu-māyā in all things, obeisance, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance. To the Devī who is called consciousness in all things, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance. To the Devī who exists in all things as intelligence, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance," and so forth.

It is here that the philosophers who advocate the theory that śakti is unconscious[3] have given supreme evidence of their intelligence and learning. They think that all these śaktis held in the body of the Jīva are gross[3] śaktis. The Devas have said: "The Devī who is called the Śakti of consciousness in all things," "who pervades this entire universe as consciousness, obeisance, obeisance to Her." The Devas say that She is consciousness itself, but the philosophers possessing so-called acute vision, think that She is unconscious. For this we cannot blame the philosophers, for of course nothing that they say is unsupported by reason. And the reason here is this: If She is not unconscious,[4] whence have the philosophers got such an idea, notwithstanding Her being intelligence, memory, and the like? What they say

[1] *Lit:* shadow or reflection. (See A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess.")

[2] Vṛtti. The vṛtti of a thing is the work that it does, and therefore function. [3] Jaḍa. [4] Jaḍa.

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is, therefore, true. What difference would there be between Deva, Dānava, and man, if what Devas see as conscious does not appear as unconscious to the eyes of men? Whilst the sight of a lovely child makes the milk flow from a mother's breast it causes the lolling tongue of a wolf to quickly waggle. The form in which She appears before a person depends on the peculiar tendencies with which he is endowed by Her. Moved by fear for Madhu and Kaiṭabha, Bhagavān Brahmā made prayer to the tāmasī jaḍa-śakti,[1] appearing as sleep, and instantly that sleep, which robs people of consciousness, became consciousness itself, and, assuming the aspect of a four-armed Devī riding a lion, stood forth in the firmament. Philosopher, if you are a believer, if you have faith in the words of Devas, explain to me by means of reasoning and arguments why you understand this Śakti to be unconscious Śakti. What shall I say to you? To Her alone I say, O Mother, in the Satya age you destroyed the Daityas Śumbha and Niśumbha by first spreading your vibhūti śaktis[2] and then withdrawing them, but how much longer will you allow these Daityas of the Kali age to live! Or who is such a Sādhaka in this Kali age as can, like the Devas, bring You to earth with his prayer? I, therefore, ask, O Mother, when will such a powerful Sādhaka be born as will be able to sacrifice these Daityas before You, and with their blood make the current of your worship again flow strong in India?

So much about what philosophers have understood. What Sādhakas will next hear will astound them. The very remembrance of the thing makes me feel as if the gates of hell are opening under me. The Brahmadaityas[3] of the nineteenth century have arrived at still another conclusion. They say that the Śākta-Dharma[4] is a result of the coalescence between Hinduism and Buddhism.[5] In sorrow for such things as this have poets sung: "What do not people see when the sun sets! Innumerable stars

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[1] The unconscious śakti, whose substance was the tamas guṇa.

[2] Kauṣiki, Kālī, and so forth.

[3] The sect of Brāhmos, against whom the book wars, and who are called demons of the nineteenth century.

[4] The religion of the worshippers of Śakti.

[5] See Introduction to this book.

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shine in the sky, lights show their power in every house, and even the tiny young of glow-worms spread their lustre in every direction." There is nothing in what they (the Brāhmos) say which deserves a reply rather than mere ridicule. To-day the sun of Bhārata's[1] Dharma has, in circling round Bhārata-Sumeru,[2] disappeared on one side, and in the darkness which has ensued Daityas, Dānavas and Pisācas[3] have made their appearance. Community of Sādhakas! this state of things will not last much longer. Ruddy rays of the young sun have become visible on the summit of the Sumeru. She who grants all desires Herself stands forth to reply, and, with high arms outstretched, says: "Fear not, fear not, Sit for one more moment on the vīra's seat of śava-sādhana in this great cremation ground and firmly continue the japa[4] of the great mantra of the great Śakti. The sun of siddhi for the Tāntrik world is about to rise. She to whom the Tantra belongs says: 'No Paśus[5] will remain on earth, but only Kaulas.' "

Even here the trouble does not end. Towards the close of the abovementioned saying of the Devas relating to the aspects of the Devī, and while dealing with the māyā-vibhūtis[6] of the Māyāmayī, they say: "To the Devī who exists in all things as error, obeisance, obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her, obeisance, obeisance." But this expression of truth from the small hearts of Devas has found no place in the large heart of this little religion. A thief's wife may enter into the apartments of a queen and steal her ornaments, but on reaching home she is at her wits' end to know which ornament to put on which part of her body.

Similarly, the eclectic fraternity, which is bent on establishing concordance between all schools of thought, has, by purloining this statement of the aspects of Māyā-Brahman from the Mārkaṇḍeya-Caṇḍī, put it on the head of the new Brahman of theirs, which is partly with and partly without attributes, and have at last found, with utter astonishment, that "The Devī exists in

[1] India. [2] Mount Meru.

[3] Demons and filthy and malignant spirits.

[4] An allusion to the Tāntrik rite in which the sādhaka recites mantras seated on a corpse.

[5] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.* [6] Māyā-manifestations.

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all things as error." Horror of horrors! This cannot be. The Merciful Father can never exist as error; for everyone professing the "little religion",[1] is unerring and above all error. The Brāhmo has, therefore, substituted the expression "as good" (mangala-rūpeṇa) for the expression "as error" (bhrāntirūpeṇa). O what depth of learning! His knowledge of versification is commensurate with his knowledge of Brahman! The Brahman who is supposed to be formless, taintless, and made of all sorts of negation, has nothing to do with whatever is frightful, horrible, oppressive, and dangerous, or with the darkness, sorrow, grief, disease, dirt, abomination, damnation, and sin which there are in the world, but sits still and alone in a formless abode of peace, selecting and gathering by Its side only such things as are good according to Brāhmos. Around It the infinite multitude of Jīvas inhabiting the infinite universe are consumed in the fire of sin, trouble, grief, sorrow, disease, and suffering. But Brahman who is Īśvara and Bhagavān, and aware of their existence, takes no heed of them, but in hatred and disgust turns His face against them. Tell me, brother Brahmajñānī,[2] does not this bespeak onesidedness on the part of the universe-pervading Creator of the Universe? Brother, you take pride in your knowledge of Brahman. But what is the meaning of the word Brahman? The verbal root "bringha" means pervasion. What is all-pervading is called Brahman. Is it possible for Brahman who is all-pervading to be so one-sided as to be associated with what is good to the exclusion of what is bad, with smiles and not with tears, with heaven and not with hell—to be in virtue and not in sin? Our Brahman is a quite different thing; the Brahman of the Āryaśāstra, from which you have obtained the name of Brahman, exists as well in heaven as in hell, as well in virtue as in sin, as well in desire as in cessation of desire,[3] as well in good as in evil, as well in creation as in destruction, as well during awaking as in sleep, as well in Ātma as in mind, as well in prāṇa as in the senses. It exists the same everywhere, in every molecule

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[1] Upadharma—that, is, Brāhmoism.

[2] Knower of Brahman; here, a Brāhmo.

[3] Nivṛtti.

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and atom[1] of the innumerable millions of universes,[2] consisting each of fourteen worlds;[3] It exists everywhere in unconsciousness,[4] consciousness,[5] and in the play of consciousness. It is She who causes bondage, and it is She, again, who brings about liberation. For this reason, after the killing of Mahiṣa, the Asura, the Devas understood that just as the worshipping propensity in their hearts came from Her, so the fighting propensity in the hearts of Asuras also came from Her. Just as She provided the Devas with Svargalakṣmī[6] for their prosperity, so also She was the cause of the fatal night of Asura Mahiṣa's death. When the Devas perceived this, they said:

"Oh Devī, who art Lakṣmī[7] in the houses of virtuous men, Alakṣmī[8] in the houses of sinful men, intelligence in the hearts of cultured men, reverence in the hearts of pious men, and shame in men born of good families, I bow to Thy lotus-feet. O Devī, maintain the universe." It is because, as avidyā, which is error,[9] She can bind, that as vidya, which is knowledge,[10] She can again remove the bondage. Otherwise, who is She to liberate who has not the power to bind? It can never be that while the judge will order imprisonment, the jailer will give release. Just as the judge's order is necessary for imprisonment, so it is also necessary for release. The Āryaśāstra is not so blind, so foolish, and so erring, as to be terrified on hearing that "She exists as error." The Śāstra therefore says: "That eternal supreme Vidyā is the cause of liberation. She, again, is the cause of Jīva's bondage in samsāra. She is the Īśvarī of the Īśvaras of all! Although, according to prison rules, a prisoner can sometimes obtain temporary freedom to walk in the prison yard, such freedom cannot give him permanent release, for his hands and feet remain still firmly bound by iron chains. Similarly, although one can live in heaven[11] and similar regions[12] in consequence of having performed works of high religious merit,

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[1] Aṇu and paramāṇu.
[2] Brahmāṇḍas.
[3] Bhuvanas.
[4] Jaḍa.
[5] Caitanya.
[6] The tutelary Devī of Svarga, or Heaven.
[7] Devī of prosperity.
[8] The opposite of Lakṣmī.
[9] Bhrānti.
[10] Jñāna.
[11] Svarga, one of the fourteen regions (lokās).
[12] Loka (see *post* and *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*)

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one does not thereby become free from the bondage of māyā. Unless Mahāmāyā, in whom are the three guṇas and who holds in Her hand the cords of the three guṇas constituting the bondage of māyā, Herself removes the bonds, who else in the world can grant release? The Śāstra has, therefore, said, "She is the Īśvarī of the Īśvaras of all"—that is to say, although Brahmā and other Devas are Īśvaras of all, they have to pray to Her, the supreme Īśvarī, for the removal of their bondage and liberation. She is the sole Īśvarī of the Īśvaras of all.

The aforesaid physical śaktis—intelligence, sleep, hunger, thirst, beauty, memory, intellect, restraint, etc.—which appear unconscious[1] to us in our ordinary vision, are not in reality unconscious. Just as light cannot be dark, so śakti cannot be unconscious. Different parts of the māyā-śakti which consists of the three guṇas, sattva, rajas, and tamas, can only differ from each other in so far as one or other of the guṇas predominate; for instance, the sattva guṇa predominates in śaktis like mercy, peace, beauty, shame, forgiveness, and reverence; the rajas guṇa predominates in śaktis of passion like desire, anger, greed, effort, intoxication of mind[2] and vanity; and the tamas guṇa predominates in śaktis like delusion, lethargy, error, drowsiness, and sleep.

Of these, the sāttvik śaktis are always naturally manifest and conscious; the tāmasik śaktis are always unmanifest and seemingly unconscious, full of delusion, and insensible; and the rājasik śaktis are partly manifest and partly unmanifest, partly conscious and partly unconscious. On seeing the tāmasik śaktis above-mentioned, a person may easily arrive at the conclusion that they are unconscious. But does he never ask himself, whence have these śaktis come? According to Jīva's destiny, from the very time that he takes a body, an inseparable relationship is established between him and the enjoyment of happiness and suffering of sorrow. The senses, the mind, the function of life and the whole of the Jīva's body are made in such a manner as to be suitable for this enjoyment and suffering. For this reason sleep is as much necessary to him as food. And according

[1] Jaḍa. [2] Mada.

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to this necessity She, as Jīva, appears both as enjoyment and suffering as well as sleep. If She does not exist as consciousness at the root of sleep, who, then, is its cause? Light in the moon, radiance in the sun, power of burning in fire, motion in air, coolness in water, smell in earth—these śaktis may ordinarily appear to be unconscious, but in reality they are not so. They merely seem to be unconscious. To admit that all these śaktis are really unconscious is almost to accept the atheistic[1] principle; for self-origination of material śakti is the same thing as creation, preservation, and destruction of the world by Nature. In the eyes of the faithful there is nothing really unconscious in the dominion of the Mother, who is made of consciousness. All the things which we know to be unconscious are, to the sight of wise men, nothing but emanations of consciousness from Her whose substance is consciousness; only by reason of the incapacity of the world which is composed of the three guṇas to manifest pure consciousness, they are darkened just as are the sun's rays when passed through a blue glass, with this difference—that while the sun's rays and the blue glass are different things, in the case of this light the sun, the rays, and the glass are one and the same thing.

In the root She is all-Brahman; in the stem She is all-māyā; in the flower She is all-world, and in the fruit She is all-liberation. Brahman, Īśvara, Māyā, and Avidyā—these are Her four aspects. Dividing Herself into these four parts, the Player of the blissful play throughout the world becomes Herself mad in the intoxication of Her own joy—Herself taking birth Herself, dying, Herself dancing in Her own cremation ground, and Herself becoming Śiva in Her own corpse. She Herself enjoys the play. She is Herself Puruṣa,[2] Herself Prakṛti, Herself the spouse of Mahākāla, Herself attachment, inclination, and goal, and Herself the daughter of Supreme bliss. She is Herself māyā, Herself non-māyā, and Herself She who yields māyā. She is Herself vidyā, Herself avidyā and Herself the eternal Devī who is the object of sādhana. Ask the Vedas, the Vedāntas, the Purāṇas, or the Tantras, and every one of these Śāstras will

[1] Nāstika.

[2] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

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bear unmistakable testimony to this Her (monistic) character. In this śāstrik vision of faith, a sādhaka sees the Brahmāṇḍa-play in both Her aspects of vidyā and avidyā, and sits on the Mother's lap in both bondage and liberation. The world regards the bondage as due to māyā, but he sees it to be caused by the Mother. It then inspires him with love and a feeling of wounded pride. Softened by that love, and hardened by that feeling of wounded pride, he sits lovingly on the lap of the Mother, holding Her hand with his hands, which are bound with the bonds of māyā, and, overwhelmed with tender feeling, says: "Mother, what a mad[1] girl you are!" The mad Sādhak Vilāmbara has therefore said, addressing the mad mother, "Is it for nothing that I tell you, O Kālī, that you were a magician's daughter? Otherwise, why should you have enchanted the whole world with māyā-magic?"

Again, the peaceful Sādhaka Kamalākānta has sung: "Tell me, what is bad and what is good in you. Some you save by granting them knowledge in the form of vidya. Others you cover with avidyā and draw down into the pit of delusion. Many people say that every Jīva is Śiva. Why, then, does He who is ever joyful become destitute of joy? Mother Kālī, I, Kamalā-kānta, tell you my mind. Some enjoy happiness followed by happiness, while others pass their lives in sorrow." After seeing, hearing, and thinking over all this, one can only say: "I always seek Thee who art above māyā, full of māyā, universal māyā, eternal, pure, blameless, one without a second, and, again, the cause of the world's liberation through māyā,[2] the bridge over the sea of existence."

Those who, on merely hearing the name of śakti, leap to the conclusion that śakti is māyā without understanding the three-

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[1] As pointed out by Babu Dinesh Chandra Sen ("History of Bengali Language and Literature," p. 119), the English word "mad" does not convey the meaning of the word "pagla," for in Bengali it is tinged with a feeling of tenderness, and persons so called are greatly loved. The term denotes rather a person of amiable and eccentric character, and is akin to the Persian dewānā.

[2] Māyā is here both the binder and the liberator (see *post*). As binder She is universal māyā, and as liberator She is above māyā. In what sense Māyā can liberate, is explained, see *post*.

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fold division of śakti-tattva[1] into vidyā, avidyā, and paramā, and without knowing the difference between māyā-śakti and Brahma-śakti—to them it is needless to show any evidence other than the words of that Māyā and professor of Māyā; for these words are sufficient. When the Mother of the world was born of the womb of Menakā in the house of Himālaya, the King of mountains was astonished at the sight of Her form possessing the lustre of a crore[2] of suns, bearing on Her head the crescent moon, large-eyed, and eight-armed and, bowing down to the earth before Her, with folded hands, and voice trembling with reverence, said:[3]

"Mother, who are you of wonderful form, possessing large eyes and auspicious marks? My child, I fail to discover who you really are. Yourself tell me the truth about Yourself."

In reply to this question put by Himālaya, the Devī said:

"Know Me to be (supreme) Śakti, the Genitrix of the world, under whose protection Maheśvara lives, whose substance is all aiśvaryas[4] and knowledge, and who is the cause of all activities and the ordainer of creation, preservation, and destruction. I dwell in the hearts of all things; I carry men across the sea of samsāra; I am eternal bliss; I am eternal, Brahman in substance and Īśvari.[5] Father, pleased with the austerities[6] practised by you and mother Menakā, and worshipped as daughter by you both, I have, through your wonderful good fortune, taken birth in your house." Here, also, She has described Herself as parama-śakti,[7] above māyā.

Again, in the same book,[8] where reincarnation is dealt with, She says:

"On coming out of the mother's womb, Jīva is deluded by my māyā, and forgets the pains it suffered therein."

"Father, for his liberation from the chains of body a seeker of salvation should contemplate me as blameless, subtle, beyond the reach of speech, pure, attributeless, transcendently luminous,

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[1] Here meaning śakti.
[2] 10,000,000.
[3] Bhagavatīgītā, in the Mahabhāgavata.
[4] Qualities of lordship of Īśvara (see *post*).
[5] Ruler.
[6] Tapas (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[7] Supreme Śakti.
[8] Chap. xvii.

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all-pervading, the sole cause of creation, preservation, and destruction, without a second, without beginning, whose substance is existence, consciousness and bliss."

"Great King, deluded by my māyā, Jivas fail to know that supreme and undecreasing form of mine which is in everything and is without a second. But those who worship Me with devotion cross the great sea of this māyā."

Himālaya also himself says: "Do not delude me any longer with Thy supreme māyā. O Īśvarī of the universe, I bow to Thee."

In the Devī Bhāgavata, and other books also, the same thing has been said. Now tell me, O advocate of the māyā theory! If Śakti Herself is nothing but māyā, what is that other māyā which She specifies as "my māyā" ?

The following appears in the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra:[1]

"The Devī asked: What is the form of Mahākālī who is the origin of mahat[2] and other tattvas; who is subtler than the subtlest, greatly luminous, and the primal Śakti? Form is possible in only such things as are the work of Prakṛti. But She is above Prakṛti, and supreme beyond all. Deva, be pleased to dispel thoroughly this doubt from my mind."

Now, if She is merely Prakṛti, why, then, does the Devī say that it is not possible for Her to have a form originated from Prakṛti ?[3]

In the Kulārṇava Tantra, Mahādeva says to the Devī: "He who is deluded by Thy māyā sees not while he sees, understands not while he hears, and knows not the truth[4] while he reads."

(Here, also, if the Devī is only māyā, why, then, does Mahādeva say "Thy māyā?") The Śāstra says that She is māyā, whose substance is māyā, and who is yet above māyā. Advocate of the māyā-theory! forget for once the māyā of māyā and be charmed by the māyā of the Mother. Know this māyā to be

[1] 13th ullāsa. [2] Buddhi (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[3] That is, if Mahākālī is, in substance, nothing but Prakṛti, then it is but natural that She should arise out of Prakṛti and have a form. The very fact that the Devī thinks it impossible for Mahākālī to have a form arising out of Prakṛti proves that She is more than Prakṛti. [4] Tattva.

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not māyā only, but the Mother's māyā—seeing the māyā-play of the Mother sink in the sweetness of māyā. It is because this māyā exists that as children of the Mother we strive to sit on the lap of the Mother. It is with reference to this māyā-theory that in Gītānjali[1] it is said: "The Vedas say that all efforts are in vain; for, O brother, everything is māyā. The Tantras say that Mahāmāyā smiles through māyā, for it is the Mother's māyā."

Viewed with a little discrimination, the very māyā which is nothing but the cause of bondage in samsāra appears as attractive as an elysiom of bliss. Cannot the very same māyā, by the influence of which we become attached and bound in love to father, mother, wife, children, etc., also liberate us, if through it we become attached by love to the Mother who is all full of māyā? It is because this māyā exists that there exists the difference between the worshipper and the worshipped. Once the tie of this māyā is broken, the relation between the worshipper and the worshipped will cease, as much as that between father, mother, wife, children, and the like. A devotee is, therefore, afraid lest māyā should disappear, and he should thus be debarred from taking the name of Mother. Although a jñānī[2] desires to be altogether free from māyā, a bhakta,[3] while he throws off māyā so far as samsāra is concerned, secretly and carefully nourishes māyā for the Mother in the core of his heart. Leaving the samsāra of māyā, he enters into the samsāra of the Mother. All who live in this samsāra of the Mother constantly sing: "Pārvatī is our Mother, Deva Maheśvara is our Father, the Bhairavas are our brothers, and the three worlds are our home."

But lest, through the influence of the Mother's name, which is antagonistic to māyā, this māyā should disappear, leaving no means of protecting the self, I desire, while there is yet time, to take the name of the Mother to my heart's content; lest, when the Mother and the son will meet, there should be left no opportunity for the son to take the Mother's name; lest there should be for the rest of my existence an end to my taking the name of Mother—the Gītānjali mournfully says:

[1] The author's work of that name.
[2] He who follows the path of jñāna, or knowledge.
[3] He who follows the path of bhakti, or devotion.

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"The day passes; it will last no longer. How much longer, O Mother, shall I bear the torments of the bondage of existence?"

"To this samsāra full of māyā you make me return time after time, under the influence of māyā. My heart is rent; I can bear it no longer."

"If everything in samsāra is possessed of māyā, then grant me, O Mother, that māyā in which the son knows none but the Mother."

"Untie the cords of the present māyā, and tie, O Mother, the cord of that māyā by virtue of which the fire of māyā will not touch me."[1]

"Putting away from me the three-fold fire,[2] take me up, O Mother, on Thy lap. Let me, for the last time in my life, call 'Mother, Mother,' and then I shall call no more."

"My life burns with an intense hunger. Give me, O Mother, the nectar of Thy milk to drink. The fire of woes burns constant and furious. It will not be extinguidhed but by that nectar."

"O Spouse of Śiva, do not fear that if once I get that nectar I shall not seek it any more. Simple child! do you not know that the thirst for nectar is not satiated with the drinking of it ?"

Such Paurāṇik evidence as has so far been produced on the subject of Śakti-tattva proves that it is from Śakti that the entire and universal Brahmāṇḍa takes its birth; that She alone creates, preserves, and destroys it, and that She alone is the highest and the best, and the object of worship to even the Devas whom the world worships. Because of this Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas, Sauras, and Gāṇapatyas[3] should not think that Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Sun and Gaṇapati avail nothing. As a matter of fact, all the Devas who are worshipped according to the five forms of worship (pañcopāsana)[4] are equally instinct with Śakti; none is superior or inferior to another. When Ṛṣis have had it in mind to intensify the piety and devotion of a class of Sādhakas, they have described the character and play of a particular Devatā in a Purāṇa, and shown that Devatā of that Purāṇa to be the highest of all Devatās. So

[1] That is, instil vidya in order that avidya may be dispelled.
[2] That is, the three-fold sorrows (tāpatraya).
[3] Worshippers of Śiva, Viṣṇu, the Sun, and Gaṇeśa respectively.
[4] That is the four Devas above mentioned and the Devī.

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much is this so that in books like the Devī Bhāgavata, the Skanda Purāṇa, the Kālikā Purāṇa, and the Kūrma Purāṇas, the greatness of Śiva, Viṣṇu, or Śakti has been described in such a way in one part, and in such another way in a subsequent part, that the two parts seem to be mutually contradictory. The contradiction, however, lies in our human vision, full of differentiating ideas. It did not in the least exist in the divine vision of the great Ṛṣis, who were endowed with the non-differentiating faculty.[1] They say that the Devatā whose greatness they were describing in one place under the name of Kālī or Śiva, was Viṣṇu Himself, and that the Devatā whose greatness they are describing in another place under the name of Viṣnu was none other than Kālī or Śiva. Questions of inconsistency, superiority, exaggeration, or false imputation, did not, therefore, at all arise in their minds. They revealed for the liberation and benefit of the followers of the five forms of worship, the manifestations[2] of Brahman (of which great Ṛṣis, possessed of divine virtue, had direct knowledge), in the course of their description of the play of the particular Devatās the latter individually worshipped. This point will be more elaborately explained in the section on "Concordance between the five forms of worship". Sādhakas will, on inquiry, find that Devatas like Śiva, Viṣṇu, and others, have been extolled immediately before or after the places from which we have quoted evidence on the subject of śakti-tattva. There is scarce room in the small volume of the Tantra-tattva for illustrations of every instance of this kind. It is only with the object of acquainting Sādhakas with the learning and intelligence of this class of precocious, avidya-born, and matricidal monsters, who give expression to their malice against Mahāvidyā by calling Her māyā, jaḍa, avidya, a great Vaiṣṇavī,[3] and so on, that we have said a few words concerning the Mother of the world.

"O Devī, nirvāṇa cannot be attained without a knowledge of Śakti"—this is the conclusion of the Tantra Śāstra. At first sight it would seem to mean that no Devatā other than Śakti has the power to grant nirvāṇa salvation. But if this matter[1]

[1] Tattva. [2] Vibhūtis.
[3] As explained in preceding pages.

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is understood in accordance with the purpose for which, and the manner in which, it has been explained in the Tantra Śāstra, there will remain no ground for any such conclusion.

We shall therefore quote here what the Tantra Śāstra itself has said in brief about Śakti-tattva:

"Brahmāṇī creates, and not Brahmā. So, O Maheśvarī, Brahmā is undoubtedly a mere preta.[1] Vaiṣṇavī preserves, and not Viṣṇu. So, O Maheśvarī, Viṣṇu is undoubtedly a mere preta. Rudrāṇī destroys, and not Rudra. So, O Maheśvarī, Rudra is undoubtedly a mere preta. Without the part of Śakti which they possess, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, abd other Devas are all without power,[2] for it is beyond all doubt that without Prakṛti they are unable to do anything by their own efforts."[3]

Now it remains to be considered what is the true nature of that which is called Śakti. But here we are in a difficulty. All Śāstras have at the conclusion of their specification of all aspects of Her nature, merely said the term "Śakti," and, after a low obeisance, retired from the field. How can it then be possible for us to specify the nature of that Śakti who is Herself Herself?[4] The juice of the sugar-cane when boiled becomes molasses,[5] the molasses when boiled becomes uncrystallized sugar,[6] the uncrystallized sugar when boiled becomes crystallized sugar,[7] and the crystallized sugar when boiled becomes sugar-candy.[8] After the state of sugar-candy, the juice admits of no more condensation. Similarly, the consequence of Brahman is the Brahmāṇḍa; of Brahmāṇḍa māyā; of māyā Īśvara; and of Īśvara Śakti; that is to say, in order to know what there is in the cause it should first of all be seen what there is in the effect. To understand the truth[9] concerning Brahman, it is necessary to understand, first of all, that concerning the Brahmāṇḍa.[10] If the begin-

[1] This term literally means the human spirit after death and before the performance of the Śrāddha; in the general sense, a ghost. Here used in the sense of a dead body.

[2] Jaḍa.

[3] The above is from the Kubjikā Tantra.

[4] Svarūpa: who is Herself Herself.

[5] Guḍa.

[6] Śarkarā sikatā, called dalo.

[7] Sita śarkara.

[8] Sītopala, called miśri.

[9] Tattva.

[10] The universe, or "egg of Brahmā".

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ning, middle, and end of the Brahmāṇḍa is considered, the sole and final conclusion is māyā. In order to understand the fundamental truth[1] concerning māyā, it is necessary to fix the mind on Īśvara, the possessor of māyā. And in order to know the fundamental nature of Īśvara, it is necessary to fix the mind on Śakti. Beyond Śakti there can be no discussion of anything.[1] Śakti is the real nature of all things,[2] but the nature of Śakti is nothing but Śakti Herself. The sun reveals all things, but nothing reveals the sun save itself. However that may be, just as the Śakti of the seed can be guessed by observing the fruits, flowers, leaves, branches, roots, stem of the tree, so we shall proceed to open the Tantra-door of the temple of Śakti-tattva by observing the process of creation, preservation, and destruction of Brahmāṇḍa, the seat of Her eternal play.

May the Mother of the universe hold the lamp of Self-revelation in Her hand, and showing to Her children, who are living separate from their Mother, the path leading to Her own Self, ultimately take them up on Her lap.

The word "śakti" is formed by adding the suffix "kti" to the verbal root "śak" in the passive voice. The verbal root "śak" means "śakti" just as the word "gam" means "gati" (motion). The philosopher would explain "Śakti-tattva" by means of discussion.

This method, however, has little pertinency. At the very outset the grammarian has, in trying to define the term "Śakti", found himself at sea, and left the matter exactly where he found it. The root "Śak" means "Śakti"; the passive voice means the same thing as does the root—that is to say, "Śakti"; and the word that is formed by adding the suffix to the root is also "Śakti". It therefore comes to this, that the grammarian has explained the word "Śakti" as Śakti, Śakti, Śakti; as if he has sworn thrice and said: "In the name of dharma, the word 'Śakti' means 'Śakti, Śakti, Śakti'."

Sādhakas will here see that, if the interpretation of the word itself has led to such difficulty, how much more difficult must

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[1] Tattva.

[2] Śakti is the svarūpa, or thing in itself.

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be the interpretation of the thing denoted by the word. In the opinion of philosophers "mutual dependence" is a fault, but grammarians adopt it as the fundamental principle for safe guidance. The object of grammarians is to state the true nature of a thing in conformity with its use, while the object of philosophers is to explain a thing with a show of learning and intelligence. A grammarian will plainly say, The root "gam" means "gati" (motion); but a man, if a philosopher, will, with a show of keen intelligence, explain the same thing as: "Going is that particular form of action in which there is produced a cessation of touch confined to one place with a view to establish at the same time a touch confined to another place."[1] The word "gati," consisting of two syllables only is thus explained by thirty-five syllables. And one can easily increase this number by adding to the interpretation a few more "tva-tva-avacchhinna."[2] But what is the result of so much labour? If a grammarian asks a philosopher, "Have you eaten?" the latter will most probably reply, "I have made food to go"—that is to say, "I have made food to leave the plate and be deposited in my stomach." Again, when the same food leaves the stomach and returns to the earth as in vomitting, a great difficulty arises if this action, too, has to be named according to the definition of leaving one place and establishing touch with another. After all the trouble taken over the interpretation, eating, going, and vomiting become one and the same thing.

To avoid this difficulty the clever philosopher has added the expression "a particular form of action," meaning thereby that every act of abandoning one place and establishing touch with another place is not going, but that a particular form only of such action is called going. Now, if it is asked, What is this particular form of action which is called going? the philosopher will reply: "It is touching another place with the feet." But in that case kicking also becomes going. One is therefore at

[1] Pūrvadeśāvacchinnasamyoga bhāvasahakṛtottaradeśāvacchhinnasamyogānukulavyāpāraviśeṣogamanam.

[2] Limitations, such as "ness," "ness," "confined to," etc., for which the Nava Nyāya school here satirized displays such predilection. It is commonly believed that a logician will in his next birth be born a jackass.

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last obliged to say that "going" is the name of that action which people call "going". It thus comes to this: "gamana" (going) means "gati" (motion), and "gati" (motion) means "gamana" (going). It is because he will, after all, have to die this death that the old and intelligent grammarian has at the outset accepted the death, and said in plain terms that "gamana" means "gati". But the philosopher will not easily accede to this. He will die the same death at last, but with a frown on his brow. This is what is called having too much intelligence. A philosopher's wisdom consists in puzzling the intelligence with a voluminous combination of words while he knows full well that there is no other means than "mutual dependence". It must therefore be understood that the loquacious philosopher and the sādhaka who knows the truth[1] concerning things are not one and the same person. The fundamental principle of a sādhana śāstra is attainment of siddhi, while the fundamental principle of philosophy is merely looking abroad with the eyes wide open. In the present discussion of Śakti-tattva we shall therefore depend entirely on Sādhana-śāstra,[2] and have nothing to do with philosophy; for millions of systems of philosophy may disappear from view, but not the least change can occur in a sādhana-śāstra.[2] However that may be, what we understand from grammar is that, as in the case of "gati", there is no means of understanding śakti with the help of any term expressive of quality other than the same word "śakti". Considering the manner in which the word "śakti" is ordinarily used, it appears from the adjuncts of śakti in such expressions as intellectual śakti, mental śakti, mnemonic śakti, visual śakti, aural śakti, active śakti, vital śakti, etc., that śakti merely takes different names according as it manifests itself in different places while, in reality the thing śakti is everywhere the same. What is the root of the śaktis which are in the branch, the leaf, the fruit, and the flower? What is that śakti under the influence of which these śaktis disappear? And what, again, is that śakti under the influence of which they appear? It is universally admitted that the answer to this question

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[1] Tattva. [2] Tantra.

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is, that Ātmā is at the root of all these śaktis. Now we must understand what this Ātmā is.

There is a class of believers who, when they hear the Upaniṣads taking the name of Ātmā, become senseless with emotion, and say that Ātmā is "attributeless and omnipresent". On the other hand, there is a class of sceptics who take up the sword at the very mention of the name of Ātmā, saying that it is "a false and fanciful thing". Put under the edges of the saws applied by these two classes of people, Ātmā has, in the nineteenth century, become finer and finer, and has ended in being something almost non-existent. It is only because Ātmā has an Ātmā of its own that it has not altogether ceased to exist. For this reason, in order now to find out the true nature of Ātmā, it must be rescued from the hands of both these classes of people, kept in a separate place, and viewed from there.

In dualistic vision cause and effect are two different things, but looked at from the monistic point of view, they are the same. That which is the effect is also the cause, and that which is the cause is also the effect; for what did not exist in the cause cannot exist in the effect, and what does not exist in the effect cannot have existed in the cause. The Śakti which does not exist in the seed can never appear in the tree, and the Śakti which does not appear in the tree cannot have existed in the seed. A consideration of the similarity between the seed and the tree leads to the conclusion that the seed is the latent state of Śakti while the tree is in its patent state. Similarly, all the Śaktis which appear manifest in life[1] —the senses, the body, and the mind— are but patent states of Ātmā, that great Śakti of the seed. To say that Śakti resides in Ātmā is to present the thing in the form in which it may be understood by means of ordinary intelligence. The final decision of the Śāstra, however, is that in reality Śakti is Ātmā and Ātmā is Śakti. It is but a mode of speech to say that fire has the power (Śakti) of burning. The truth is that fire exists as power of burning and the power of burning appears as fire. We in our ordinary vision see only the material and gross aspect of fire.

[1] Prāṇa.

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The Śāstra has therefore called that easily perceptible aspect by the name of fire, and designated the power of burning as its Śakti (power). But leaving the material aspect aside, spiritually speaking fire is nothing but Śakti. Although the expression "My Ātmā," used in ordinary parlance by worldly people, means, in reality, "What is Ātmā that I am," yet, by falsely considering the physical body to be the person (Ātmā) we are wont to say "my Ātmā" in the sense that Ātmā exists in this my physical body. Here, also, if we leave out of consideration the physical side, Ātmā becomes nothing but Śakti, because no such thing exists in the world as the Śakti of Ātmā. That which is Ātmā is Śakti, and that which is Śakti is Ātmā. In many places in the Śāstra there is mention of the Śakti of Ātmā, but in all such places it is Ātmā alone which has really been spoken of, just as people speak of the water of the Ganges, the head of Rāhu,[1] the refulgence of the sun, the light of the moon, etc., although, in reality, the water is Ganges, the head is Rāhu, the refulgence is the sun, the light is the moon, and so on. Just as, in order to express the power of Śakti, a distinction has to be imagined in ordinary usage, and expressions like "the water of the Ganges" have to be used; so although what is Śakti is Ātmā, yet authors of Śāstras have, in order to enable people to understand the Śakti-tattva,[2] often spoken of the Śakti of Ātmā; but in conclusion they have unanimously, and with one voice, said: "There is no distinction between Śakti and the possessor of Śakti." In spite, however, of this absence of distinction, they have had, even while establishing such absence, to speak of two—namely, Śakti and the possessor of Śakti—in order to explain the matter to people whose knowledge consists of distinctions. Without two there can be no distinction, and without distinction there can be no establishment of the absence of distinction.

There is yet something more for consideration. What is the true nature of that Ātmā over which there is so much quarrel, dispute, and discussion? Why do we admit its existence? Looking at this part of the question we see that the body of the Jīva is

[1] One of the navagrahas (planets).
[2] Subject of or principle concerning Śakti.

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unconscious, his senses are unconscious, and even his mind is almost so, for although the mind possesses a little of consciousness, it cannot exist independently and supported by itself. It is, therefore, a subject for consideration under whose subjection all these dependent things exist. This matter has been very clearly decided in the form of a question in the Kena Upaniṣad. There it is asked, By what are the senses of work, the senses of knowledge, mind, intellect, etc., able to perform their respective functions? What is the true nature of Him who is the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the life of the life, the mind of the mind? He has been called "the eye of the eye, the ear of the ear, the life of the life," but not the Ātmā of the Ātmā; because if the nature[1] of Ātmā is decided first of all, the question "By what?" cannot at all arise. For that is the final point, the ultimate goal. However that may be, after all these questions the Kena Upaniṣad goes on to say: "Indra, Candra,[2] Vāyu,[3] Varuṇa,[4] Agni,[5] and other Devas who preside over the senses in the Jīva's body were directing the working of the universe with their various powers and boasting of their victory over Asuras, when suddenly a mass of indescribable brilliance[6] appeared before them. Unable to make out what that enormously powerful mass of light was, Agni and other Devas, deputed by Indra, went over one by one to It and were asked by It who they were. First of all Agni said that he was Agni (fire) and Jātaveda,[8] and that he could burn the whole world. Thereupon that Devatā made of light placed before Agni a blade of grass and said, "Burn it." Agni tried his best but failed to burn the grass.

Subsequently, after Vāyu and other Devas had been equally put to shame and had returned, Indra himself went, but in an instant that Devatā, the refulgent mass of light, disappeared. Seeing the mass of light disappear, Indra understood that It had disappeared because, although He was the ruler of the three worlds, He was yet not a fit person even to approach that Devatā.

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[1] Tattva. [2] Moon. [3] Air.
[4] Water. [5] Fire. [6] Tejas.
[7] A Vaidik name for Agni. The word means "known by all things that are born," or "known as it is born" (spreads) (Sāyana's commentary on Ṛgveda).

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Thus shattering the pride of Indra, She, who is perfect Brahman and eternal, assumed the fairest form of Gaurī and appeared before the Devas, illumining the firmament with Her lustre. Then, when the Lord of Devas[1] questioned Her about Her real nature, She replied .....

We are unable to divulge Her reply to the public, for that is Upaniṣad. We shall, however, quote, from the elaborate account of this subject given in the Devī Bhāgavata, that portion in which the Devī's reply is contained. From this sādhakas will know Her real nature.

The Devī said: "This aspect of mine is Brahman in reality, the cause of all causes, the seat of māyā, witness to all and free from all defect. Divided into two parts, I create the entire world. One of these parts is Sacchidānanda-Prakṛti and the other is Māyā-Prakṛti. That māyā is my Parama[2] Śakti, and I am the Īśvari who possesses that Śakti. But just as moonlight is not distinct from the moon, so I am not distinct from māyā. O Lord of Devas! during the dissolution[3] of the whole world this māyā exists inseparate from me in a state of equilibrium, and again, in consequence of the past karma of Jīvas, this unmanifested māyā becomes manifest. The aspect of Śakti, in which She is inward looking, is called 'māyā', and that in which She is outward looking is called 'avidyā'. It was from tamas, the outward-looking avidya, that sattva, rajas, and tamas, the three guṇas, appeared at the beginning of creation, and from that threefold division appeared Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara. The rajas guṇa predominates in Brahmā, the sattva guṇa in Viṣṇu, and the tamas guṇa in Rudra, who is the embodiment of all causes.[4]

"In this Brahmāṇḍa (which is but a manifestation of avidya consisting of tamas) Brahmā is like my gross[5] body, Viṣṇu is like my linga[6] body, Rudra is like my causal[7] body, and I myself

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[1] Indra. [2] Supreme. [3] Pralaya.

[4] The Bengali word is "Kāraṇa". All effects lie in a potential state in their causes. This potential state represents tamas guṇa. Rudra, in whom tamas predominates, thus holds all effects in him as their cause.

[5] Sthūla. [6] Subtle body. [7] Kāraṇa.

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am turīya caitanya.[1] It is in my state of equipoise that I reside in all things. Beyond that, I am Parabrahman, devoid of form. I have two aspects, according as I am with and without attributes. The aspect which is above māyā is attributeless, and the aspect with māyā is with attributes. Thus, possessing two aspects, I create the world as Māyā, enter into it as Brahman, and send Jīvas along their respective paths, whether good or bad, according to law and karma."[2]

"It is I, again, who appoint Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara to do the work of creation, preservation, and destruction of the three worlds. It is out of fear of me[3] that the wind blows, the sun rises and sets, Indra gives rain, fire burns, and death takes the lives of Jīvas. For this reason I am called 'the best of all' (sarvottama), 'the ruler of all' (sarveśvari). It is through my grace that ye triumph in all things. Ye are but puppets in my hand. Being will in substance, I ever act according to my own will, and according to your karma I grant victory at one time to you, and at another to Asuras. Through pride, and over-powered by intense delusion, you forgot me, the dweller in all things. For this reason, in order to favour ye, my energy,[4] the Śakti, which is 'the best of all,' emerged from out of your bodies and appeared before you as what you thought to be a Yakṣa."[5] (That is to say, separated from that great Śakti, you failed to recognize your individual Śaktis and also were unable to do the works for which you are appointed in the world.)

"Henceforward, by all means shake off pride and seek the protection of me, who am existence, consciousness, and bliss." (That is to say, knowing me to be the controller of all, attribute the fruits of all works, done or undone, to the full exercise of my great Śakti, and be gratified on thus resigning yourselves to me.)

Ādyā-Śakti (primal Śakti) says: "Divided into two parts I create. One of these parts is Sacchhidananda-Prakṛti, and the other is Māyā-Prakṛti." Again, when māyā is Her Śakti She

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[1] Consciousness in its fourth state (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[2] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*
[3] That is, in obedience to me.
[4] Tejas.
[5] That is, as some being of a high order deserving honour and adoration.

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is the Īśvarī possessing Śakti. Spiritually speaking, Śakti is not different from Her, just as moonlight is not different from the moon. It is the said part which is pure Sacchhidānanda which has been designated as Ātmā in all Śāstras. The body, the senses, the mind, the life, all are subordinate to Him, all functions are within His control; for all things in the body are unconscious and that Ātma which is consciousness is the sole cause of their being possessed of consciousness.

Just as the sun is the only source of all light during the day, so Ātmā is the only source of all physical consciousness. As the sun is not a different thing from its light, so Ātmā is not a different thing from Śakti or consciousness. The ultimate point to which ātmā-tattva[1] leads is, therefore, Citśakti.[2] What we know as consciousness is called Śakti. In explaining the word Śakti it may finally be said that Śakti is that thing which makes able—that is to say, that power by virtue of which the body, the senses, the mind, and the prāṇa,[3] which are all unconscious,[4] become able to act like conscious things. It is because Śakti is universe-pervading that its other name is Ātmā. What pervades is Ātmā; He who pervades all is called Ātmā.

In the driving of a carriage we see that the carriage, the driver of the carriage, the person driven, and the horse, all four in fact, are in motion. Of these four, only one is independent and conscious, two are dependent and conscious, and the remaining one, though itself unconscious, is drawn like a conscious thing. The horse, though conscious, is under the control of the driver; the driver, though conscious is under the control of the person driven; and the carriage, though itself unconscious, is successively under the control of all three—*viz.*, the person driven, the driver, and the horse. Sādhakas constantly see such a carriage-driving within their bodies. The body composed of five elements is nothing but a carriage for carrying a person in and out on this journey of samsāra. The ten senses are its ten horses, the mind is its driver, and Ātmā, that great Śakti, is the person driven.

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[1] The discussion of the Ātmā—spiritual science.
[2] Consciousness is the ultimate Śakti.
[3] Vital principle.
[4] That is when dualistically considered as separate things.

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Just as the driver guides the horses according to the directions of the person driven, so the mind also, urged by the Śakti of Ātmā, sends the senses to their individual pursuits.

As the carriage runs drawn by the horse, the body moves drawn by the senses. The mind and the senses are both conscious under the influence of the consciousness of Ātmā. In all the pursuits of the senses the body appears as conscious. The body is subordinate to the senses, the senses are subordinate to the mind, the mind is subordinate to Ātmā. Of the four, therefore, three are dependent, and only Ātmā is independent, all the others being subordinate to Him. There is, however, this peculiarity here, that, unlike the ordinary person, seated in a carriage, the person who is driven in the carriage of the body does not travel along any path fixed by Him; He simply orders the driver to drive the carriage and then retires. The driver is left to choose whichever path he likes, and to enjoy or suffer from the comforts and discomforts of the path on which his choice may fall. The person driven has neither comfort nor discomfort. Ātmā is ever free from attachment.

The driver may, with unerring discretion, take the carriage safely through the paths of sin and virtue which the Śāstra indicates; but if he is weak, there is danger for him. The ten wayward horses draw the carriage in ten different directions and, consequently, the small carriage, built with five pieces of wood[1] and full of innumerable joints, breaks down in mid-path. Besides this, the hero who has taken charge of driving the carriage is hardly able to control himself, not to speak of controlling the horses. He has a dread of the two reins śama and dama,[2] which are prescribed for controlling the horses. Even the thought of them often greatly frightens him, and, in many cases, he is of opinion that the idea of handling and using them in tightening or loosening the hold on the horses, is but an incredible fancy. It is owing to such weakness on the part of the driver that in the hunt for happiness in the samsāra, Jīva so often forgets his aim.

[1] The five elements.
[2] Equanimity and self-restraint, external and internal.

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It is here in the samsāra that the terrible catastrophe begins. Although the driver is weak, he can cast his eyes towards the person sitting in the carriage, and then, forgetting fatalism,[1] one becomes inclined to say: "O Mother! what play is this of yours? The strength and intelligence of the driver are not unknown to You; why, then knowing everything, have You placed the carriage in charge of such a worthless driver? True it is that I am a great sinner, but for that You cannot abandon me. In this great crisis neither the driver nor the person driven[2] can save himself. I know that I must suffer the fruits of my own karma; but still, O Mother! I desire to see You once in this broken carriage[3] of mine."

"As in Rāvaṇa's last drive in a carriage, so in this last drive of mine appear for once, O Mother! mad and shouting, 'Fear not! fear not!'. Stand in the carriage, holding me to Thy bosom. Do not disappear, but appear for a moment in my heart, so that I can for once see the lustrous glory of your world-encompassing beauty, filling my eyes, filling my mind, filling my life. O Mother! let the light of that death-conquering black beauty of yours, which has the lustre of a million moons, dispel the darkness of my fear of death. O Mother! may I, climbing to your bosom and becoming yours, die the death[4] for which even immortals, regardless of their privilege of immortality, long. So I say, come, O Mother! let us two, Mother and son, together undertake today the journey by carriage. Let me for once see, O Mother! your Car-journey[5] in the carriage of my body, in the carriage of my eyes, in the carriage of my mind, in the carriage of my heart. I have heard that there is no return journey[6] in your carriage, and hence this desire on my part."

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[1] Adṛṣṭa vāda.

[2] There is no escape for the driven because he, too, is associated with the sufferings of the Jīva, though he does not feel them.

[3] The human body.

[4] Of the individual self in the bosom of the Mother.

[5] Rathajātra, or car festival, in which the Deva or Devī is drawn in a car. Here the human body is the Devī's car.

[6] To the worlds of birth and death.

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CHAPTER IX

ŚIVA AND ŚAKTI

SĀDHAKA, no Śastra or community denies that the above-mentioned Ātmā, who is Śakti, is Brahman. Differences of opinion exist among those whose knowledge consists of distinctions only, in respect of the three words Ātmā, Śakti and Caitanya.[1] The word Ātmā is masculine, the word Śakti is feminine, and the word Chaitanya is neuter. As there are differences of gender between the three as names, so there are also differences of kind between them as things—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara are male, Śakti is female, and Caitanya or Brahman is neuter. As there is no scope for distinction of kind in attributeless Citśakti the Śāstra has designated Caitanya or Brahman as neuter. Again, owing to differences in the forms in which the Śakti of will, the Śakti of knowledge, and the Śakti of action appear,[2] the Śāstra calls the Deva male and the Devī female, in accordance with the male or female principle inherent in all fathers and mothers in the world, beginning at the root from the Father of the world and the Mother of the world. This is no mere imagination on the part of the authors of the Śāstra; it is but a statement of what is really true. Femininity and masculinity exist wherever there is a description of creation, preservation, and destruction caused by māyā through a union of the two persons. The neuter state, or the state beyond that of a male or a female exists when the aspect above māyā is described. To speak of neuter does not imply complete absence of the male or the female principle; it implies only an unmanifested or undeveloped state of those principles (Śakti). Even in the bodies of neuters we see in life that both the masculine and feminine marks are found to be present. In some cases the neuter's body is found

[1] That is, spirit, power, and intelligence or consciousness respectively.
[2] Icchhāśakti, jñānaśakti, kriyāśakti.

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to be more like that of a male, while in others it is found to be more like that of a female, the only distinction being that the male or the female principle is not fully developed.

From what the Śāstra says about the generation of neuters it appears that when neither the male nor the female principle can subdue the other, a neuter is created, in whom the two principles exist in a state of equilibrium. The Śāradātilaka[1] says: "An excess of menstrual blood causes the birth of a female, an excess of seed that of a male, and an evenness of the quantities of blood and semen that of a neuter. This is certain."

The Mātṛkābheda Tantra says: "An excess of the Śakti's (woman's) blood over the puruṣa's (man's) seed causes the birth of a female child; its opposite causes the birth of a male child, and if the blood and the semen be equal in quantity a neuter is born. This is certain." It has also been stated what proportions of blood and semen mean equality in quantity.

"At the time of procreation twenty-two[2] units of menstrual blood and fourteen units of seed are produced in the bodies of the woman and the man respectively. This is equality. If the blood be in excess (that is to say, if twenty-two units of blood mix with less than fourteen units of semen), a female is born; and if the semen be in excess (that is to say, if fourteen units of semen mix with less than twenty-two units of blood), a male is born; and if the above-mentioned numbers of units of blood and semen remain the same, a neuter is born."

Even in this equality of the numbers of units the excess[3] of half a unit one way or the other leads to the appearance of female marks or male marks in the body of a neuter; and according to these marks neuters may be divided into male-neuters and female-neuters. But the Śāstra, which notices the result only, has rejected this useless classification and has ordinarily treated all neuters as the same. Nevertheless, although the difference between male neuters and female neuters makes no difference

[1] See also as to the process of sexual union, chap. ii. of the Mātṛkābheda Tantra, chap. i, Śāktānandataraṅgiṇī; Prāṇatoṣiṇi, p. 29.

[2] See Śāradātilaka.

[3] The equality is supposed to hold so long as there is not the difference of one full unit.

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in the fruit, it makes some difference at the root and in the flower; otherwise, the difference would not have appeared. At the root there is the difference between the quantities of blood and semen, and in the flower there are differences, physical, mental, and functional. The neuter whose body resembless that of a male develops mostly masculine tendencies, and the neuter whose body resembles that of a female develops mostly feminine tendencies. Similarly, just as the male and female principles exist undeveloped in neuters, their developed forms being the male and female entities, so both the principles of Śakti and Śiva exist unmanifested in the Brahman, their manifestations being Umā and Maheśvara, Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, Sītā and Rāma, and so on. Besides this, that blissful Brahman aspect of Śiva and Śakti, wherein They are manifest and yet unmanifest and are inseparate from each other, and which can be worshipped only as an undifferentiated mass of consciousness and bliss—that aspect is Mahāvidyā, primordial, beginningless, worshipped of Brahmā and other Devas and sought by the three worlds.

We shall possibly, while dealing with the subject of sādhana, be able to present to the scrutiny of Sādhakas a sketch of a part of that aspect wherein bliss has its full play and which is monistic and eternal and above māyā. Here we must understand that Caitanya[1] is nothing but Śakti, although the word itself is neuter in gender. To this end we shall quote a single sūtra from the Tantra Śāstra, in which the all-luminous aspect of Brahman is established. The Nirvāṇa Tantra[2] says:

"In the Satyaloka,[3] Mahākālī and Mahānidra live, embracing one another inseparably. That eternal Śakti, possessing the lustre of the moon, the sun, and fire, taken together and united with the eternal Puruṣa, exists like a grain of gram. (That is to say just as the two halves of a grain of gram are attached to one another, so they too are attached to one another.) As a grain of gram is covered by an external shell, so She is covered

[1] Consciousness.
[2] This is not to be confused with the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra.
[3] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

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by Her own covering of māyā. As the shell of a grain of gram is dark and hard compared with its brilliant and soft valves, so māyā also, discordant with its three guṇas, is dark and hard compared with Śiva-Śakti, full of brilliance and soft with supreme bliss. As the whole, consisting of two halves and a shell, is called gram, so the whole consisting of Śiva-Śakti and māyā, is called Brahman. To an ordinary observer, making his observation from outside the shell, a grain of gram seems to contain only one thing, but he who can see through the shell finds within that grain two halves facing and inseparably attached to one another. Similarly, he who judges Brahma-tattva through māyā finds Brahman to be but one. To the eyes, however, of an adept in such knowledge,[1] an accomplished Sādhaka, who is aware of the deceptive character of māyā, there are manifested both His aspects of Śiva and Śakti, all full of supreme love. As sparks shoot from a burning fire, so Jīvas, forming parts of Her body, shoot from the limbs of the luminous Devī into infinite millions of Brahmāṇḍas."

The male and female forms, different from one another, are, whether they appear in the aspect of Īśvara or in that of Jīva, but instruments in the dualistic play. They are different only as instruments, but not as agents. The agent is the same for both the instruments, and that is Ātmā or Śakti. Again, as in the bodies of males and females, so in the bodies of neuters also, Ātmā or Śakti is the presiding Devatā. It therefore comes to this, that the bodies of males, females and neuters are alike seats of the play of Citśakti. There is no other alternative. It is an extremely erroneous conclusion that because words ending in the suffix "kti" are feminine, śakti must always refer to the female body and have no concern with the male body.

But, then, it may be asked, Why does the word śakti mean a female only? To this question we shall be bound so far as it will be in our power to give a suitable answer in its proper place. Here, we shall say this much alone, that the word śakti, meaning the female principle, is Yogārūḍha,[2] for, fundamentally, Śakti

[1] Tattva.

[2] That is, a word which has an etymological as well as a special or conventional meaning, but is used only in the latter sense. Thus, pankaja, which etymologically applies to what is "mud-born," is used only in respect of a particular thing—*viz.*, the lotus of which it is the synonym.

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is the same as Prakṛti, and males and neuters are but changed forms of that Prakṛti. The assumption of the male form by Śakti for the purpose of creation is but an exhibition of play. At the close of the play of samsāra, Mahāśakti will withdraw this form and exist in that which is really Her own. This is the conclusion of those who believe in a perfect Mahā-pralaya.[1] But the arguments and authorities in favour of this view are very weak.

The Tantra Śāstra, therefore, holds that the puruṣa side[2] is the cause of the bondage consisting of attachment to the samsāra, and that the śakti side is the cause of liberation[3] or cessation of attachment to the samsāra. There is no ground for the occurrence of a perfect great Dissolution[4] of the flow of worlds. For this reason, eternal are the creation, preservation, and destruction by Her who is eternally blissful. Eternal is Her bondage, and eternal also is Her liberation. In the eternal form of Her who is ever liberation itself, eternal also is Puruṣa as the seed of creation. But in the case of liberation in the form of perfect nirvāṇa, the Puruṣaśakti exists only to enjoy the play of bliss. Waves of creation no longer play in Her.[5]

For this reason, keeping that śakti[6] beneath Her as a mere instrument of play, the Mahāśakti, who grants liberation, stands upon it and, lost in the enjoyment of the sweetness of Brahma-bliss, assumes the part of a mad woman, subduing the inactive Puruṣa, or creative śakti,[7] under Her feet. She of dishevelled hair proclaims the victory of liberation, and, extending Her

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[1] A pralaya (dissolution of things) after which there is no creation.

[2] Literally, "part" (of Śakti)—that is, the Śakti of creation. Puruṣa is not here used in the Sāmkhya sense, but in that of the male side of creation. According to Hindu ideas it is the male who creates; the mother side is the support—ādhāra only.

[3] In so far as Śakti represents the supreme motionless Brahman, and Puruṣa the Dakṣiṇa śakti its manifestation (see Mahākāla Tantra, *Post*).

[4] Mahāpralaya. For karma is eternal, and after pralaya exists in the Brahman in a latent subdued form, which, on the rewakening, becomes the seed of new worlds.

[5] That is, in liberation (mukti) that aspect of Śakti which is creative ceases to create, and there is then only līlānanda-mukti, the play of the supreme Divine Bliss.

[6] That is, Puruṣa.

[7] Though the creative agent, He has ceased to create.

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uplifted hands, gives assurance to Her children, frightened by the dread of existence, with the cry, "Fear not! fear not!". That Puruṣa, the creative śakti, is Mahākāla, and on his breast that Dispeller of the fear of death, that Delighter of the heart, Charmer of the mind of Kāla holds Her Kaivalya-play. It, has, therefore, been said in the Mahākāla Tantra:

"Puruṣa is called right (Dakṣiṇa, because he is the right side of the body), and Śakti is called left (Vāmā, because she is the left side of the body). So long as the right and left, the male and female, remain equally powerful, so long alone does the bondage of samsāra endure. When, by dint of intense sādhana, the left śakti has been awakened, when the left has overpowered Puruṣa, the right Śakti, and lost Herself in gracious joy on His body (that is to say, when both the parts of right and left are filled with Her power), then She (who is bliss unalloyed) grants highest liberation[1] to Jīva. For this reason, the Mother, the saviour of the three worlds, is called Dakṣiṇa Kālī. Just as the body of a neuter, which represents the unmanifested state of both the male and female sides, is not produced without a union between a male and a female, so the Brahman aspect does not appear without the presence in it of Śiva and Śakti, the Father and Mother of the Brahmāṇḍa in an unmanifested state.

"As a neuter cannot give birth to children, so the Brahman aspect, which is above the three guṇas, is devoid of the creative, preservative, and destructive activities. Again, in its state with attributes there appear from it Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, Sāvitrī, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Gaurī, and other forms, according to distribution of guṇas, and as the male and female agents for the control of those guṇas. It is from the same aspect of Śakti that the creation, preservation, and destruction of untold millions of Brahmāṇḍas take place."

It therefore follows that Brahma, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Sūrya and Gaṇeśa, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Sāvitrī, Durgā, Rukmiṇī, and whomsoever else, male or female, you may mention, are all aspects of Śakti. Brahmā is the aspect of Śakti in Her play of creation, Viṣṇu is the aspect of Śakti in Her

[1] Mahāmokṣa.

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play of preservation, and Maheśvara is the aspect of Śakti in Her play of destruction. Sūrya is the aspect of Śakti in Her play as light and heat,[1] Gaṇeśa is the aspect of Śakti in Her play as siddhi,[2] Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, Sāvitrī, Durgā, Sītā, Rukmiṇī and others are the aspects of Śakti in Her play as the Mahāśakti, who is at the root of all Śaktis, and in whom they all rest. If a Sādhaka is a Vaiṣṇava, his knowledge of Viṣṇu-Śakti will remain imperfect so long as he does not understand that that Śakti is not different from Śiva, Durgā, Sūrya, and Gaṇeśa Śaktis; and if he is a Śākta his knowledge of Śaktitattva will remain imperfect so long as he does not recognize that the Ādyāśakti[3] is not different from Viṣṇu, Siva, Sūrya, and Gaṇeśa Śaktis. And this is the case whichever be the Śakti a Sādhaka may worship. And so long as knowledge remains thus inperfect, liberation is unattainable.

The Devatā I worship is the Devatā whom the world worships. I do not think of Śiva, Śakti, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu, or whomsoever else you may mention, as nothing to me, and as one whom I cannot worship, for all of them are but different aspects, assumed in play, of Him whom I do worship. All these aspects represent the play which He loves, who is the life of my life and the dearest treasure of my heart. How can I dishonour those aspects, the beloved wealth, and the treasure of sādhana of Him who forms my most beloved treasure? When such perfect love appears with full force, the heart of the Śākta is rent, as it were, into a hundred pieces by the thunderbolt of discriminating knowledge[4] were he to think of Kṛṣṇa as different from Kālī. The Vaiṣṇava, also, is sorely pained to think of Kālī as different from Viṣṇu. No one can be perfectly happy with an imperfect knowledge of the Devatā he worships. The Tantra Śāstra has therefore said, with a deep voice which stirs the community of Sādhakas:

" 'O Devī! Nirvāṇa can never be attained without a knowledge of Śakti." This message is as dear to the heart of the devoted Sādhakas, full of love, as it is painful to the community

[1] Tejas.
[2] Success (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[3] The primordial Śakti.
[4] Bhedajñāna.

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of Asuras in human form, who are inimical to Devas. It has always been a self-evident truth that words spoken by Devas pain the hearts of Asuras. We have, therefore, nothing to say on the point. Just as Śāktas have imperfect knowledge of śaktitattva if they think that the term 'Śakti' denotes only such aspects as Kālī, Tārā, and Durgā, which are but fruits of śaktitattva so Vaiṣṇavas have imperfect knowledge of Viṣṇutattva also if they distinguish Viṣṇu from Śakti, with this difference, however, that the latter consider themselves pandits to boot. But Bhagavān, the ocean of eternal knowledge, and the treasure which devotees worship, has in speaking of His own self, said in the Tantra Śāstra:

" 'Śakti, Maheśvara, and Brahman—these three words mean the same thing. The only difference which exists between them is that one is feminine, another is masculine, and another is neuter.

" 'This difference, however, belongs only to the words. In themselves there is, in the highest sense, no difference between them.' "

We fail to understand the notions which those people entertain of Parameśvara and Parameśvari who, when they observe marks of masculinity and femininity in the appearance of Devatās of worship, thereupon say that the forms of even Parameśvara and Parameśvarī differ, in that the one is a male and the other a female principle. If the shape of Īśvara's body be as fixed and material as that of the body of a Jīva, then of what does his līlā[1] consist? That is called līlā which, though not really true, is done as if it were true in the excitement of the bliss enjoyed by the Self. Just as an actor has really no connection with the parts he plays, so Bhagavān or Bhagavatī also have no connection with the forms which, in play, they assume in various ways.

Their connection with the assumption of forms is the same as that which exists between an actor and his acting. Nevertheless, although the assumption of forms is not really true so far as they are concerned, it is perfectly and undoubtedly true so far as a Jīva is concerned. For, to their eyes, the samsāra is as much a play as their own bodies, but so long as this samsāra does not appear to you and me as a play, their bodies also do not appear

[1] Play (see Introduction to this book).

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to us as such. Secondly, if for the sake of peculiarities of terms, it be necessary to admit that their forms follow those peculiarities, then, like the female and male forms of Śakti and Śiva, or Lakṣmī and Nārāyaṇa, the form of Brahman becomes neuter owing to the term Brahman being neuter; but in reality the thing denoted by the term Brahman is not neuter, although it is so according to the gender of the terms. Similarly, the things denoted by the terms Śiva and Śakti are not in reality always bound in male and female forms respectively, although they are male and female, according to the gender of the terms.

There is, however, this particularity to be noted here, that as forms for play are impossible in the state of an attributeless neuter, He assumes male and female forms as a being with attributes for the purpose of creating, preserving, and destroying the dualistic world,[1] fulfilling the desire of Sādhakas, and that the sweetness of the play be enhanced. Worship of an attributeless being is impossible. The Tantra[2] therefore says:

"The neuter state of monistic existence, which is the result of the union of Śiva and Śakti, is revealed of Itself, without any separate worship thereof.[3] The attributeless aspect which is the fruit of all sādhana, and in which, at the conclusion of all sādhana, the worshipper sinks and loses himself, cannot be attained while sādhana continues. It is attained by the great siddhi known as nirvāṇa."

Whatever form She may assume in Her aspect with attributes is but Her form. That Śakti alone who grants enjoyment, salvation, and devotion, is in all such forms. Now the Sādhaka may, if he so desires, know Her as Viṣṇu, Kṛṣṇa, Śiva, and Rāma, or as Kālī, Tārā, Rādhā, Durgā, Sītā, and Lakṣmī, or please himself by calling Her mother, father, friend, and well-wisher. It does not matter whether the Vaiṣṇava considers Her as Viṣṇu in the form of Śakti, or the Śākta considers Her as Śakti in the form of Viṣṇu. When we sink in the ocean of Her substance,

[1] Prapañca; literally things formed by the combination of the five elements.

[2] Gandharva Tantra, 34th paṭala.

[3] That is, the male and female forms are assumed by the Supreme for sādhana. When a sādhaka has attained siddhi in any of these forms, the neuter form reveals itself before him without any further effort on his part.

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which is Cit-śakti,[1] forgetful of all differences of masculinity and femininity appertaining to forms, then Kṛṣṇaśakti, Śivaśakti, or Kālīśakti, and all other Śaktis, will be mingled into one by the waves of that ocean.

That Mahāśakti is everywhere the real giver of liberation, from whomsoever it may come, whether Śiva, Viṣṇu, Durgā, Gaṇeśa, or Sūrya. This condition of unity does not arise without a knowledge of śakti-tattva.[2] Nirvāṇa liberation is impossible so long as all things do not combine into a state of unity. It is for this reason that the Tantra has said: "O Devī! Nirvāṇa can never be attained without a knowledge of Śakti." Ramaprasada[3] also, whose life was in the Tantra, has sung the same air: "You assume five principal forms, according to differences of worship. But, O Mother! how can you escape from the hands of him who has dissolved the five and made them into one ?"

To our great misfortune, our doubts thicken round the very names of the Mother of the world on account of that very sādhana, with which devoted sādhakas sink into the sweetness of Her being[4] and are blessed and liberated from the state of a Jīva. One of Her names, which are suspected to contain imprints of Māyāvāda,[5] is Viṣṇumāyā. It is out of this name that Her title of "great Vaiṣṇavī" has been evolved. It has been said in the Yoginī Tantra:[6] "Remembering the time when, after the destruction of the Asura, Ghora, in the waters of pralaya, Ādyāśakti gave to Brahmā, Viṣnū and Maheśvara the charge of creation, preservation, and destruction respectively, Mahādeva said: 'O Spouse of Śambhu! that Mahākālī granted us the śakti of will, the śakti of knowledge, and the śakti of action for doing the work of creation, preservation, and destruction. She gave the śakti of will to Brahmā for creation, the śakti of action to Viṣṇu, and the śakti of knowledge, which is the embodiment of all śaktis, to me.' "

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[1] See *post.*

[2] The truth relating to Śakti.

[3] Rama Prasada Sen, the great Bengali poet, Tāntrik, and worshipper of Kālī Mā; born 1718, died 1775.

[4] *Lit.:* "sweetness of Tattva."

[5] Māyā theory.

[6] 10th paṭala.

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According to differences in the mutual relation of the guṇas of māyā which consists of three guṇas, the rajas guṇa gives rise to the śakti of will, the sattva guṇa gives rise to the śakti of action, and the tamas guṇa gives rise to the śakti of knowledge. In Her play, wherein She appears as embodied beings, these three forms of śakti constitute the forms of Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Māheśvarī. In these three forms She is as mush Brahmamāyā and Śivamāyā as She is Viṣṇumāyā; but still, in most places, the Śāstra has spoken of Her as Viṣṇumāyā. The reason for this is that from the commencement of creation to the time of pralaya, Jīvas, in this samsāra are subject to the preservative Śakti. The preservative Śakti rests in Viṣṇu, and the presiding Devī over the act of preservation is Vaiṣṇaviśakti or Viṣṇumāyā. The Devas have therefore said in this hymn to the Devī:

"O Devī! thou art Vaiṣṇaviśakti of infinite power, Thou art Parama (Supreme) Māyā, which is the seed of the universe. All this world is deluded by Thee, and Thou, again, when pleased, grantest liberation to Jīvas." Although as Māyā She is Śivamāyā and Brahmamāyā also, the Devas said: "Thou art Vaiṣṇaviśakti, Thou art Parama (supreme) Māyā," because preservation of the Universe is impossible without the influence of Vaiṣṇavī-Māyā. For this reason they again said: "Thou art the seed of the Universe," because "all this world is deluded by Thee"—that is to say, without delusion the Universe cannot exist. It is under the power of Viṣṇuśakti that Jīva is overcome by delusion,[1] and for this reason one of the names of Viṣṇu is Janārdana, or He who overcomes Jana.[2]

The world, whilst in the condition of preservation, has not so much concern with the Māyā of Brahmā, by which it was created in the past, or the Māyā of Maheśvara, by which it will be destroyed in the future, as with the Māyā of Viṣṇu, which has operation in the present time. At the time of creation Jīvas had no independence in the matter of coming into the world, for the Jīvahood of Jīvas was created by the force of the will of Him who also created the world by His will. Again, at the time of the great Dissolution,[3] Jīvas will have no independence in the

[1] Māyā and moha. [2] An Asura. [3] Mahāpralaya.

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matter of leaving the samsāra for the Jīvahood of Jīvas is withdrawn by Him who also destroys the world. Neither, therefore, at creation nor dissolution have Jīvas an opportunity to think or even a right to pray independently. At those periods Jīvas are naturally bound to enter into the womb of Prakṛti, and to issue from it even against their will, just as a child is bound to enter into and issue from the womb of its mother. As from the time of conception to that of delivery a mother remains pregnant with child, so from the time of creation to that of dissolution Māyā remains full of the spirit of preservation. It is during this period that She is called Viṣṇumāyā. The Śāstra says: "The child in the womb grows according to the quality of the food which the Mother takes." Similarly, we, the children in the womb of Prakṛti, will be built or grow according to the things She enjoys in the samsāra. The best efforts of the Jīva should therefore be directed towards seeing that the things enjoyed by Prakṛti become free from elements of rajas and tamas guṇas, and full of the sattva guṇa. Customs, principles, practices, rules and regulations, sādhanas and bhajanas,[1] mantras and tantras, all are required for this end.

He who, by satisfying the Prakṛti of the self with sāttvik food, and being himself nourished by the high quality of that food, is able in due time and with safety to issue from the womb of Māyā; he alone is able, after Her delivery, to see the child-bearing aspect of Mother Mahāmāyā, and will fondly be placed on Her lap. Just as on issuing from the womb a child who has, while living within it, suffered indescribable pains, forgets them all at the sight of the affectionate face of its mother, so, issuing from the womb of Māyā, a great yogī, who has attained siddhi, forgets all the sufferings of the dualistic samsāra at the sight of the refulgent liberating[2] beauty of the face of Mother Brahmamayī, full of love for the universe. When confined in the womb of Māyā, the Sādhaka saw the terrors of the darkness of delusion; but issuing from it he to-day takes shelter in the lap of the same Mother of the Universe.

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[1] Worship. [2] Kaivalya.

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He now, instead of being in darkness, sinks in the sea of an existence made of light, brilliant with the lustre of a hundred crores[1] of autumnal moons, and beauteous with bliss. Rocked on the lap of the Mother by the waves of his emotion and the ripples of affection, he now plays, and sees that Māyā no longer exists as Māyā, but has become Mother Māyāmayī.[2] For this reason I said that in conformity with the custom of entertaining a pregnant mother in sādha,[3] so all the sādhana[4] and bhajana in the samsāra are but eatables offered to Prakṛti for Her sādha. In preparing for this entertainment it is only necessary to understand that these infinite millions of Brahmāṇḍas receive their conception from the Śakti of Brahmā, or the Śakti who is Brahmā; that the nourishment of the child in the womb comes from Viṣṇuśakti, or the Śakti who is Viṣṇu, and that the delivery is caused by Śivaśakti or the Śakti who is Śiva.

The Śakti in whom the rajas guṇa predominates causes the creation of the world of Jīvas; the Śakti in whom the sattva guṇa predominates causes its preservation; and the Śakti in whom the tamas guṇa predominates causes its dissolution—that is to say, release from the bondage of Māyā. A change in the creation which proceeds from Brahmaśakti is impossible, so that any desire on the part of a Jīva to alter the physical creation by means of worship of Brahmaśakti or Brahmamāyā is futile; but if the worship is intended for any other object, that is a different thing altogether. Every Jīva is, in the present state, subject to Viṣṇuśakti or Viṣṇu-māyā. The question of destroying the rajas guṇa and the tamas guṇa can arise only in the future state when, by means of sādhana and bhajana practised in the present state, the sattva guṇa has been developed. It is only then that one becomes fully competent to worship Śivaśakti, the Destructrix and Dispeller of the woes of samsāra.

Fundamentaly, the very tamas guṇa with which, as Avidyā, She creates the samsāra, is again destroyed at the time of the

[1] See *post.*

[2] The Mother whose substance is māyā.

[3] Sādha is the entertainment of a mother during the eighth or ninth month of her pregnancy, so that no desire for food may be left unfulfilled.

[4] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

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great dissolution[1] by Herself in Her aspect of Śivaśakti, as is eternal knowledge and bliss; but this competence for worship arises only with the perfection of sattva guṇa. All the instructions of Śāstras are meant for the development of the sattva guṇa during the period that Jīva lives in the womb of Avidyā, overpowered by the rajas and tamas guṇas. In explaining māyātattva to those who have acquired competence for sādhana, the Śāstra has therefore in most places referred to Māyā as Viṣṇumāyā, who exercises direct power in the present state instead of as Brahmamāyā or Śivamāyā, whose work concerns the past and the future respectively. The reason why the Śāstra does this is that the Jīva's direct knowledge of Māyā[2] must be derived from the present display of Her power in the samsāra.

By Viṣṇumāyā or Viṣṇuśakti is not meant māyā or Śakti subordinate to Viṣṇu. Such Vaiṣṇavas as are ill-disposed towards Śakti will probably refuse to understand this; but we say that whether Vaiṣṇavas understand it or not, Viṣṇu Himself understood, in His battle with Madhu and Kaitaba, whether Śakti is subordinate to Viṣṇu or Viṣṇu is subordinate to Śakti, and made others also understand it. In short, O Vaiṣṇava! the very notion which you possess of the "dual" existence of Śakti and possessor of Śakti, or of māyā and the wielder of māyā, is erroneous. In reality the aspect of Viṣṇu is but an aspect assumed by Her who is Māyā or Śakti.

Again, some communities, proud of their Vaiṣṇavism, are nowadays heard to say that Bhagavatī is a great Vaiṣṇavī. "To serve as if it were one's own self" (to serve God as one would serve oneself) is the conclusion (idea) of the Vaiṣṇava Śāstra. We have therefore nothing to say to the Vaiṣṇava who holds that Bhagavatī is a great Vaiṣṇavī, because this notion merely bespeaks his own nature. There is, moreover, this delightful inconsequence, that while the Mother is considered a Vaiṣṇavī the Father is a spiritual brother.[3] Blessed be thou, O Vaiṣṇava! Bravo to thy conclusion! Living in the society of men, you alone

[1] Mahāpralaya. [2] Māyā Tattva.

[3] That is, Śiva the Father must be a Vaiṣṇava if the Devī be Vaiṣṇavī; and as Vaiṣṇava he is a spiritual brother—that is, one of the same sect.

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have realized the beauty of this relationship. If you have such a strong desire to call Mahādeva your spiritual brother in order to create a precedent (which they follow) for your own community, then why not treat every one equally, from the Mother of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara to the mother of the smallest insect? Let the Śākta and the Vaiṣṇava unite their voices in singing: "Jīva is Śiva! Śiva is Jīva!" Then, why Mahādeva alone? All Devas, Adhidevas,[1] Upadevas,[2] Dānavas,[3] Mānavas,[4] and all the creatures in the Brahmāṇḍa will appear to be nothing but the children of Jagaddhātrī,[5] who brings forth endless millions of worlds.[6]

There will then exist no other relationship but that of the spirit, so that the three worlds will then be full of spiritual brothers only. Can you tell me, O Vaiṣṇava! when, by the blessings of Vaiṣṇavas and the grace of Viṣṇu, the day will come on which you will realize Śakti, not as Viṣṇumāyā, but as Viṣṇu? Śakti is called Vaiṣṇavī, not because She is possessed by Viṣṇu, but because She is progenitrix of Viṣṇu. Ganga[7] is called Bhāgīrathī because She was worshipped and brought down by Bhagīratha. The reason for Her being called after the name of Bhagīratha is not that She, whom even Brahmā and other Devas are rarely able to worship, is under the protection of Bhagīratha, but that, urged by the tender desire "to be called the mother of Bhagīratha,' and in order to immortalize in the three worlds the immense glory of Bhagīratha, that crest-gem of devotees, the Mother of the universe, dweller on the head of Śaṅkara, and dispeller of the sorrows of samsāra, has proclaimed to the three worlds, out of love for Her devotees, the greatness of devotion shown to Her, by the adoption of the name of Bhāgīrathī.

Similarly, in spite of Her being the progenitrix of Brahmā and other Devas, and Mother of the universe, She has proclaimed Her śaktis of creation, preservation, and destruction by adopting the names of Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Maheśvarī. She was born as Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara and was, again, Herself

[1] Ruling Devas.
[2] Subordinate Devas.
[3] Demonic spirits.
[4] Men.
[5] Devī as supporter of the universe.
[6] Brahmāṇḍas.
[7] The River Ganges.

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their Mother. If you call Her dependent, She is dependent on Herself alone. If you call Her patroness, She patronizes none but Herself. There is, therefore, no possibility of Her being injured by anything which may be said about Her. What, however, we can do is to march along the path to hell. So I say, O Sādhaka, beware! save yourself from all these sinful notions.

Another of the names of the Mother is Brahmamayī. This, too, gives to the detractors an opportunity to object that She who is Brahman can never be Brahmamayī. If She is Brahmāṇī why, then, is She called Brahmamayī? She might very well be called Brahman. In reply to this objection we shall not, after recitation of the whole of Rāmāyaṇa, proceed to give an account of Sītā.[1] It is no wonder that man, whose nature it is to err, will be deluded by Her māyā, which sometimes deludes even Brahmā and other Devas ardently devoted to Her. Sādhakas who are inquirers after spiritual knowledge[2] should, however, know that just as beads are made of gold,[3] images are made of earth,[4] Gangā[5] is made of water,[6] and the sun is made of light and heat,[7] so the substance of the Mother of the world is Brahman.[8] The word Brahmamayī has been formed by adding the suffix mayat to the word Brahman in the sense of "Own form."[9]

What is Her "own form" that is Brahman; or what is Brahman's "own form" that is She. Even while embodied, Brahman She is, in reality, above all guṇas, and so She is called Brahmamayī. Her hands, feet, and other limbs, her raiments, ornaments, and conveyances, the members of Her family, etc., are all Brahman's "own form," and so She is Brahmamayī. The meaning of the term Brahmamayī is not "One who pervades Brahman,"[10] but "One who is Brahman".[11] Brahman pervades the universe, but the Ārya Śāstra makes no mention of anything which can pervade Brahman.

From all that we have so far said on the subject of śakti-tattva, Sādhakas have surely come to understand that the śakti

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[1] That is to say, to repeat which is a useless task.
[2] *Lit.:* "inquirers of tattva."
[3] Svarṇamayī.
[4] Mṛṇmayi.
[5] The River Ganges.
[6] Jalamayī.
[7] Tejomayī.
[8] Brahmamayī.
[9] Svarūpa.
[10] Brahmavyāpinī.
[11] Brahmarūpiṇī.

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to whom ill-disposed Śāktas and Vaiṣṇavas refer is not the same Śakti as forms the subject of the Tantra Śāstra.

Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sītā, Rukmiṇī, Sāvitrī, Sarasvatī, Gangā, Gaurī, Gaṇeśa,[1] Sūrya, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Indra, Candra, Vāyu, Varuṇa, Deva, Dānava,[2] Gandharva, Kinnara, Yakṣa,[3] Rakṣa,[4] man, beast, bird, insect, and the endless universe which is full of all such moving and motionless things is Śakti in substance. Again, Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sītā, Satī, and other manifestations of Brahman, are but the Kaivalya play[5] of Mahaśakti. In the quotation which we have already made in connection with the destruction of thousand-headed Rāvaṇa, Sādhakas have obtained a notion of Sītā-tattva.[6]

Here we shall make a few quotations to illustrate the manner in which the Śāstra supports[7] the contention of the Vaiṣṇavas that Rādhika is "Śrīkṛṣṇa's handmaid," and their practice of worshipping Rādhika with articles of food first offered to Śrīkṛṣṇa. From this play of the waves of śāstrik authority, Sādhakas will form a conception of the vast expanse and grave solemnity of the sea of the nectar of Rādhā-tattva.[8]

In the Devī Bhāgavata[9] Śrī Nārāyaṇa says to Nārada: "In the region of Goloka[10] Rādhikā was first of all worshipped by Kṛṣṇa, the Paramātmā, within the Rāsamaṇḍala[11] on the full-moon day in the month of Kārtik. Next, under the command of Bhagavān, She was worshipped by the company of herdswomen and cowherds, their boys and girls, the cows, and Surabhi, the queen of the race of cows. Since Her worship by the inhabitants of Goloka, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and other

[1] Rādhā, beloved of Kṛṣṇa; the Devī Lakṣmī; wife of Rāma; wife of Kṛṣṇa; wife of Brahmā; the Devī Sarasvatī; the River Ganges (considered as Devī); the elephant-headed Devā, son of Śiva.

[2] The sun; Śiva; Viṣṇu; Lord of the Devas; the moon as a Deva; the Lord of air; the Lord of waters; Deva; and demonic spirit.

[3] Devayonīs of those names (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[4] Demonic beings.

[5] That is, the play of unity in diversity. Rādhā, Lakṣmī, Sītā, and Satī are Mahāśakti, and so one with Her.

[6] The subject of Sītā, wife of Rāma.

[7] That is, does not support.

[8] The subject of Rādhā.

[9] Chap. ix.

[10] Kṛṣṇa's heaven (see Viṣṇu Purāṇa, I. iii).

[11] The enclosure within which the rāsalīlā was performed.

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Devas, and the Munis inhabiting the city of immortals ever worship and adore Her with devotion, with flowers and incense. On earth She was first worshipped by Suyajña in the sacred field of Bhāratavarṣa, under the direction of Bhagavān Mahādeva. Subsequently, under the command of Srīkṛṣṇa, the Paramātmā, the inhabitants of the three worlds began to worship Her."

In the second Rātra[1] of the Nāradapañcarātra it is said: "Just as Śrīkṛṣṇa, who is Brahman in reality, is above Prakṛti and free from attachment,[2] so Rādhikā, who is also Brahman in reality, is above Prakṛti and free from attachment. Just as, for the sake of work to be done, He at times assumes forms with attributes, so Mahāprakṛti Rādhikā also, for the same purpose, at times assumes the form of gross Prakṛti. In gross form that subtle Prakṛti lives, by the force of yoga, in the life,[3] the tongue, the intellect, and the mind of Śrīkṛṣṇa, the Parameśvara. Nārada! at times She seems to appear in, and disappear from, the world formed of māyā; but in reality She neither takes birth, nor is dependent on the action of any other being or person. Like Bhagavān Hari, Bhagavatī Rādhikā also is eternal and truth in substance. O Muni! the Mahāśakti who presides over the life of Bhagavān Śrīkṛṣṇa appears as Rādhā, and She who presides over His tongue is Sarasvatī Herself. She who presides over His intellect is Durgā, the destroyer of evil, who has now incarnated Herself as the daughter of Himālaya, the Mountain-king, the destroyer of the enemies of the Devas, who, by appearing in the form of the mass of energy[4] of all the Devas, crushed the race of Daityas,[5] and gave back to the Devas the sovereignty of the kingdom of heaven; She it is who holds the three worlds, who appears as hunger, thirst, mercy, sleep, contentment, nourishment, forgiveness, shame, and error, who rules over all Jīvas, and who, in particular, presides as Sāvitrī over the hearts of Brāhmaṇas. It was from the left side of Rādhikā that Mahālakṣmī appeared, She who is the presiding Devatā over the wealth,[6] of Īśvara. From a part of that Mahālakṣmī appeared the sea-

[1] Chap. ii.
[2] Nirlipta.
[3] Prāṇa, the vital principle.
[4] Tejas.
[5] Titans.
[6] Aiśvaryya, that which constitutes Īśvara-hood (see *post*).

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born[1] Kamalā, who arose from out of the sea of milk what time it was churned. It is She who is the earthly Lakṣmī on earth, and the spouse of Nārāyaṇa who lies upon the sea of milk. The heavenly Lakṣmī also, who presides over the dwellings of Indra and other Devas, appeared from a part of Devī Mahālakṣmī who Herself is the spouse of the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha. Sāvītrī, who dwells in the Brahmaloka, is the wife of Brahmā. At the command of Bhagavān, Saravastī had already divided Herself into two parts. The first part remained as Sarasvatī and the second became Bhāratī[2]. Both were accomplished yoginīs by dint of yoga. Of them, Bhāratī is the wife of Brahmā, and Sarasvatī is the spouse of Viṣṇu. Parameśvari Rādhikā, the mistress of the play of Rāsa,[3] is the presiding Devatā, over the Rāsa-circle, and that eternal Brahmasanātanī incarnated Herself in full in the region of Bṛndāvana.[4] Within the Rāsa-circle She was the principal actress of the play of Rāsa, making use of the occasion of the love-play to show Her love to devotees. Bhagavatī ate betel chewed by Bhagavān, and Bhagavān ate betel chewed by Bhagavatī (in order to show their love for devotees, or to show that both of them were, in fact, the same). In reality both of them have the same body. (In outward vision they appear to possess different bodies to enhance the sweetness of their play, but in reality no such difference exists.) The difference between them is like the difference between milk and its whitenses, that is to say, just as the substance milk is an aggregate of such constituent qualities as whiteness, liquidity, sweetness, and so forth, so the substance Brahman is an aggregate of existence, consciousness, bliss, and the like. Just as the state of milk cannot be determined if we omit any of its qualities, such as whiteness, liquidity, sweetness, and so forth, so Brahmanhood cannot be determined if we omit any of its qualities, such as śakti, possessor of śakti, śakti vibhūti,[5] and the like. Just as substantially no difference exists between the constituent parts of a thing, although,

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[1] Sindhubālā, who came out of the sea.
[2] Sāvitrī.
[3] See *post*.
[4] The town Bṛndāvana, in the United Provinces.
[5] Manifestation of Śakti (see *post*).

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according to the method of linguistic exposition, differences are imagined to exist between them, and different names are assigned to them, so actually no difference exists between Rādha and Kṛṣṇa, although they are different in the aspects they assume in play. Brahman is both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. She who is Rādhika is also Kṛṣṇa, and He who is Kṛṣṇa is also Rādhikā. Those who distinguish between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, who constitute one non-differentiable, non-dualistic supreme Being,[1] will not escape the torments of hell so long as the sun and moon will endure. The heinous bodies of those who make a distinction between them, and, failing to understand the play of Brahman, speak ill of Rādhikā, the supreme Prakṛti, will be boiled in the Kumbhīpāka hell so long as Brahmā lives."

Again, in the sixth Chapter it is said: "First utter the name of Rādhā and next that of Kṛṣṇa or Mādhava.[2] Whoever reads in the opposite way surely commits a sin equal to that of murdering a Brāhmaṇa. Rādhikā is the Mother and Śrīkṛṣṇa is the Father of the universe.[3] Although both are the same in substance, yet in the incarnation They take in play and, according to human[4] custom, the Mother is the object of a hundred times greater glory, adoration, and worship[5] than the father."

"It is in order to maintain this glory that Śāstra has enjoined men to take the name of Rādhikā first and that of Śrīkṛṣṇa next. It is natural to expect that because the mother is the wife of the father her position will be less glorious than his, according to men's notions; but here custom is inspired by dharma,[6] and is, consequently, approved by the Śāstra. Not only the custom of men, but even the Śāstra itself says: 'In glory the mother surpasses the father a thousand times.' The reason, also, for this has been stated in the Śāstra. It says that: 'The mother is an object of greater glory than the father because she holds the child in her womb and nourishes it.' He is the Guru of the

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[1] Tattva.

[2] Mādhava is one of the names of Kṛṣṇa as destroyer of the demon Madhu.

[3] The mother's name is always placed first.

[4] Laukika.

[5] See *post.* The child should regard its mother and father as two visible incarnate Deities (Mahānirvāṇa Tantra, chap. viii, verse 25).

[6] A religious spirit.

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world by whom the world is educated and initiated. Prakṛti tests this education and initiation of the world—that is to say, the Guru can teach only what the Jīvas[1] (nature) can accept. Prakṛti, therefore, has the charge of testing the passion or dispassion for education.

"This Prakṛti, the examiner of the world, however, has also to receive education and initiation from mother Mahāprakṛti.[2] For ten months and ten days before its appearance in the world of men the child's Prakṛti is initiated in the mantra which is contained in the mother's body, food, senses, and mind, and educated therein. It has already been shown that in the proportion of seed and blood the quantity of blood, which is the mother's portion, is the greater. For this reason the mother's contribution to the Jīva's body is larger than the father's. At the very outset this gives to the mother superiority over the father. Next comes the pregnancy for ten months and ten days. During this period the record of the Jīva's destiny lies engraved on the foundations of the mother's body. The child's body is built and developed according to her thoughts, her doings, and the humours[3] and blood flowing in her body.

"After this, again, for five years the child drinks the mother's milk. Taking all these matters together, it appears that the child's indebtedness to the mother permeates his veins, arteries, bones, marrow, vital airs, body, senses, mind, and, indeed, every molecule and atom from the tip of his toe to the top of his head. His indebtedness to his father is only in respect of the act of procreation. This is the law of nature. The child's indebtedness to his father for acts done subsequent to procreation, such as performances of the ten samskāras,[4] education, maintenance, and so forth, is not such as must naturally appertain to the father, for in his absence these acts may be done by any other guardian. For this reason it does not matter very much to the child if the father dies after procreation; but if the mother dies after conception, not even the united power of the three worlds can supply her place.

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[1] Prakṛti.
[2] The greater Prakṛti.
[3] Rāsa.
[4] Sacraments (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

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"Under the weight of this great and solemn glory the Śāstras ordaining household duties have, with heads bowed down, said: 'The mother is a thousand times more glorious and more worshipful than the father.' Such being the decision of even such Śāstras as deal principally with domestic duties, it need hardly be said that in the spiritual[1] vision of the Tantra Śāstra, which deals principally with sādhana dharma,[2] there is in this no difference between the worldly mother and the spiritual Mother (or Śakti). In the chapter on Śaktilīlā[3] we shall try, as far as it will be in our power, to show how the principle[1] (of the superiority) of human motherhood is applicable to Rādhā, the embodiment of the unattached[4] Brahman, and what the Tantra Śāstra says on the subject. Here we desist, for to do so would be to digress. For the present, the very notion under which Sādhakas know Her as Mother will enable them to understand this much, that the name of Rādhā should be taken first and then that of Kṛṣṇa, and that a reversal of this order is faulty worship in their sādhana for truth.[1]

"Those who speak ill of Rādhikā either through perversity of intellect caused by unavoidable fate, or through blindness due to ill-feeling towards Vāmācāra,[5] or through ignorance or sin, do not know that Rādhikā is an aspect of Hari's own self, and that an enemy of Rādhā is also an enemy of Hari. In the next world the place of such a man will be in a cauldron of boiling oil in the midst of the Kumbhīpāka hell for the life-time of a hundred Brahmās, and in this world the extinction of his progeny and his own total ruin is inevitable."

"(So long as that detractor of śakti shall not die), he will fall (from his own dharma[6] through unrighteousness),[7] and be deprived of the power to arise on account of malice against Śākti; he will be prostrate on earth and suffer from endless disease and

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[1] Tattva. [2] Rules as to ritual practice, worship, etc.

[3] The play of Śakti.

[4] Nirlipta. The supreme inactive Brahman, unaffected by, and unattached to, the Brahmāṇḍa (universe).

[5] Vāmācāra is one of the Tāntrik Ācāras (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[6] Svadharma. [7] Adharma.

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perils at every step. In the Brahmakṣetra,[1] the Puṣkara tīrtha, this (truth) about Rādhā was told by Hari to Brahmā, and subsequently I heard it from Brahmā. Sādhus (who are themselves pure and purify others) constantly worship the lotus-feet of Rādhā, who purifies the three worlds. Bhagavān Śrīkṛṣṇa Himself ever offers arghya[2] with devotion at those worshipful lotus-feet. Besides this, (during the play he enjoyed) in the woods and groves of Bṛndāvana, Bhagavān (possessed of a form sweet with love) painted with devotion (by soft touches of his own finger) the tips of the toes of the lotus-feet of Her (who was all full of love and Brahman incarnate) with the cool and brilliant paint of alakta."[3]

In the Rādhā Tantra it has been said: "In the great mantra consisting of Rādhikā's thousand names, Śrīkṛṣṇa is the Ṛṣi, the great Devī who crushed Mahiṣa is the presiding Devatā and Gāyatrī is the metre. The application of this mantra is for siddhi in Mahāvidyā."[4]

The Ṛṣi of a mantra is he who was the first to be initiated and attain siddhi in it.[5] There is nothing to say to those who are worshippers of the yugala form[6] and with a knowledge of monistic truth do not discriminate between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. But even from the dualistic standpoint sādhakas should now understand how Rādhikā stands in relation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.[7]

Again, in the Nārada Pañcarātra it has been said: "Of the great mantra consisting of one thousand names of Rādhikā, by whose grace Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Sovereign Master[9] of the region of Goloka, and has attained the position of supreme Lord of the great mantra, Nārada is the Ṛṣi, and (owing to its being a different mantra)[10] Rādhikā, who is supreme over the supreme, is the Devatā. Its application is for the fulfilment of the fourfold aim.[11]

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[1] At Puṣkara, in Ajmer, where there is a temple to Brahmā.

[2] An offering of grains of paddy and blades of dūrvā grass to a person honoured and respected, or to an image.

[3] Red lac paint, with which the soles of the feet of Hindu women are painted. [4] The successful attainment of knowledge of Devī Mahāvidyā.

[5] And who reveals it.

[6] The form in which Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are combined.

[7] That is, even if they make a distinction between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, sādhakas should understand from the above the relation of the one to the other.

[8] Chap. v, 5th Rātra. [9] Adhīśvara. [10] From the preceding.

[11] Dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

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Rādhikā is the handmaid, initiation in whose mantra, and education and accomplishment in whose Tantra, made Bhagavān to become Bhagavān. To worship Her, even the Lord of the universe descended on earth from Goloka and became Her servant. In the hope of kissing Her graceful feet the head of Cintāmaṇi[1]—the thought of whose feet gratifies the world of moving and unmoving things, who is the crest-gem of the four-headed Deva[2]—touched the dust. If, then, you call Her who is such an one Śrī Kṛṣṇa's handmaid, then whom would you call Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Īśvarī?[3] I would not of my own accord, say all this. I am obliged to do so in reply to your words. It is for this reason that there is so much discussion about honour and dishonour. My Kṛṣṇa has neither a handmaid nor an Īśvarī; but when your Kṛṣṇa has necessity for a handmaid, why should he not have necessity for an Īśvari as well? The moment you step within the bounds of dualistic knowledge He, in spite of His being Īśvara, will have, by your grace, to suffer inevitably as well the state of a servant as that of a master. Or, if in your language, the person served is called handmaid and the person serving is called master, then we have nothing to object to this servitude and lordship. However that may be, O you whose knowledge is of a dualistic kind, take note that it is the nineteenth century of the Kali yuga, and apparently the custom of the age is to call mothers and aunts handmaids!

However that be, it requires now to be seen what we gain or lose, whether or not there exists a relation of master and servant between Bhagavān and Bhagavatī. If it exists, a worshipper has no right to discuss it, nor is there the necessity to do so. If Rādhikā is to be worshipped merely on the ground of Her being Bhagavān's handmaid, and if, in that worship, Her satisfaction is to be sought, then surely it is necessary to ascertain and arrive at a final conclusion as to whether She is really Śrī Kṛṣṇa's handmaid or not. But, then, who will judge the matter? If you say that we shall be the judges, and Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa them-

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[1] One of the names of Kṛṣṇa.
[2] Brahmā.
[3] Feminine of Īśvara, or Lord.

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selves will supply the evidence, then, too, it will be extremely difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion. For in the play of love which they enjoyed during their stay at Vraja, when Rādhikā said to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, "You are my all," Śrī Kṛṣṇa said to Rādhikā, "I am unable to call You 'You'. To call You 'my own' is not much."[1] Putting aside even what Śrī Kṛṣṇa said, which is more[2] than what Rādhika said, if the two are considered to be of equal positions, then, also, one of them cannot be a servant or handmaid of the other. Now, how can the matter be judged on the evidence of such witnesses? If, therefore, you want to judge the matter by a consideration of acts instead of words, then it is not for you and me to judge and arrive at a final conclusion on the matter. In this effort to appease the anger[3] of Rādhikā, Bhagavan Himself finally decided the question at the feet of Rādhikā.

But if you say that you will call Rādhikā Śrī Kṛṣṇa's handmaid, and worship Her with food first offered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in reliance only on the sentiment expressed by the words, "You are my all," spoken by Rādhikā to Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a temporary moment of service—a ripple, as it were, in the midst of waves of play in the sea of love—then even Rādhikā cannot be called inferior to Kṛṣṇa. If you can worship Rādhikā with food first offered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then I, too, can, in reliance upon the incident in which he appeases Rādhikā's anger, represent him as hankering after the leavings of Rādhikā's food and driven off with weeping. The service I speak of is as much one of sentiment as the one you speak of. As your words are sweet, but your acts are deceitful, so I am obliged to make my acts and words similar. In this state of things it is impossible for us even to come together, much less to arrive at any decision.

In sorrow have poets said: "If two persons be both candid, then the love that grows between them remains for ever candid and unshaken. If one of them be candid and another crooked,

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[1] The meaning of this is: "You and I are the same," so that the relationship of the speakers is not fully expressed by the expression "You are my all".

[2] For Kṛṣṇa did not discriminate between Him and Her.

[3] Māna—of wife with husband in love matters.

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then love between them endures for a few days only—that is to say, so long as the crookedness of the crooked person does not show itself. And if both of them be crooked, there can be no love between them, much less a permanent love." O you who speak of distinctions, this crookedness of yours and mine precludes the possibility that love may grow between us. Think but once that They who are referred to in this discussion on the subject of love are both very crooked,[1] with three bends in their bodies,[2] and yet unite to form one person.[3] The devotee has therefore said: "The moon will perish, the sun will perish, the Brahmāṇḍa formed by the spread of the three guṇas will perish, in the great dissolution, but it is the firm conviction of the Harivamśa[4] community that the constant play of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa at Bṛndāvana will never come to an end."

So, I say, O Sādhaka, see the threefold play of creation, preservation, and destruction in the thrice-bent and fair bodies of the Father and the Mother of the universe, and forget all distinctions. Call, for once, the Father Mother and the Mother Father, and making the Father and the Mother one, take them to the Sahasrāra.[5] There, in the heart of that full-bloomed and thousand-petalled lotus, shining with the refulgence of the sun and moon, in that seat of the undifferentiated[6] kaivalya-play[7] of Him who is full of light and Her who is full of light, stand with folded hands, and with a disconsolate heart weep, and say: "I know not who you are? Be you Father or Mother or another, tell me whose I am?" Brother Sādhaka, be you a worshipper of the Father or a worshipper of the Mother, you cannot have a better opportunity for putting both the Father

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[1] Kutila.

[2] Tṛbhanga: a favourite representation of the body with Indian artists is that with three curves, formed by the inclined neck, trunk, and legs.

[3] Bhagavān and Bhāgavatī are here called kutila and tṛbhanga because of the inscrutability of Their ways.

[4] Vaiṣṇava. Harivamśa, or "family of Hari," is the name of a Paurāṇik work which gives the history of the family of Hari or Kṛṣṇa.

[5] The thousand-petalled lotus in the head, above the six cakras (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[6] Abhinna.

[7] Kaivalya is mokṣa.

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and the Mother to shame[1] than at that time when they become one.

When the Father and the Mother will lower their faces in shame at making themselves known as Father or Mother, know, O Sādhaka, that on that day you will be victorious in this discussion. Whoever has once seen the place of the soft and sweet smile of shame in their silent faces, lowered in shame at the question of the son, for him all doubt as to who is the Father and who is the Mother, or who is great and who is small, has been for ever dispelled. O ye who are intimately associated with the principles of Tantra! O Sādhakas, who form the most beloved wealth[2] of the Mother! if for any of you such a day has ever come or may come in future, then on this or that day kindly remember for once, at least, this poor and destitute son of the Mother who is full of mercy for the poor.

What can I do, O brother? The truth which has to be attained by sādhana cannot be explained in words. Once call out to Her who is truth[3] itself, and of whom we now speak, and opening the portals of your heart, say: "O Mother, be Thou Rādhā adored by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, or Rādhikā adoring Him, Thou knoweth Thy own play. O playful Mother,[4] appear once in Thine own real form in the solitary grove of this heart, and in the company of Thy companions stand with three-fold bend, yet making your body one with the body of Śyāma.[5] O charmer of the mind of the charmer of love,[6] illumine but once the forest of my heart with the refulgence of Thy world-enchanting beauty, so that I may see Thee with Thine own light, just as one worships the Ganges with Ganges' water.

O beloved of Śyāma, stand forth once with a dark body, so that, O Gaurī! all idea of difference between a fair and a dark body may be dispelled from my mind.[7] O Mother, Thou Thy-

[1] The shame (lajjā) is caused by their having manifested themselves in the distinctive aspects of Father and Mother.

[2] Literally, "wealth bound in the skirt of the dress of the Mother."

[3] Tattvamayī. [4] Līlāmayī.

[5] Śyāma is a name of Kṛṣṇa, meaning of dark colour. [6] Madana.

[7] The beloved of Śyāma is Rādhā, who is fair-coloured. The word "Gaurī" means "one who is fair". It is also the name of the wife of Śiva, who is in reality the same as Rādha. The author here prays Rādhā to assume a dark body—that is to say, a body of the colour of Kṛṣṇa—so that his mind may be disabused of all ideas of difference between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

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self dost rouse and allay Thine own anger,[1] Thou Thyself dost clasp Thine own feet as Rāi (Rādhikā), Thou Thyself dost inflame Thine own anger, and as Śyāma Thou Thyself dost appease it. Thou art all full of play, and art Brahman,[2] and so this anger becomes Thee. But, O Mother, we are erring Jīvas, blinded by an intense intoxication.[3] We can be angry, but cannot appease it. Being Jīvas full of māyā,[4] we cannot therefore, understand the meaning of the (appeasing) of the anger of Her who is Brahman.

O Mother, for him who has understood its meaning, both honour[5] and dishonour[6] have for ever disappeared. O Dispeller of the fear of existence, Gladdener of the hearts of devotees, eternally pure Devī; O Mother, Thou art Śakti incarnate, the granter of śakti and liberation. Of Thy mercy grant unto us the śakti to understand the truth concerning Thyself, so that we may leave this samsāra never to return thereto, after having offered all honour and dishonour at those lotus-feet, so desired of devotees.

O you who speak of distinctions, do not widen the path whereby you go to your downfall by imagining distinctions between Śakti and the possessor of śakti. If you offer to Rādhikā food first offered to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, She will not be insulted thereby; for in Her eyes the person[7] of Kṛṣṇa is but a manifestation of Herself in play. But, for yourself, should this insulting idea arise in your mind, there is no escape from hell. Even He in the pride of whose glory you entertain these insulting notions concerning Rādhikā—even He has, in intense devotion to Her who is ever kind to devotees, said, in the Nirvāṇa Tantra:

"Those who make japa of the names of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, placing the name of Kṛṣṇa after that of Rādhā, to him do I undoubtedly grant the lot that is mine. Those who, instructed by gurus in the path of bhāva[8] or of mantra, worship me in this manner—that is to say, those who, knowing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa to be inseparable in reality and yet, in order to proclaim the

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[1] Māna (see *ante*). [2] Brahmamayī. [3] Mada.
[4] Māyāmaya. [5] Māna (see *ante*). [6] Apamāna. [7] Mūrti.
[8] Sentiment, emotion, love, devotion.

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triumph of the love of Her who is all full of love,[1] make japa of the great mantra of the two names, placing the name of Kṛṣṇa after that of Rādhā—they are ever as powerful as Myself.

"That woman, who worships me, a male, in the faith that I am inseparable from Thee, also of a truth acquires power equal to Thine own. Hear, O Rādhikā! To those who (firmly believing that you and I are inseparable) worship the yugala aspect[2] with or without pious devotion, to them I grant the state which is mine, owing to Thy love for me." That is to say, such is the unthinkable power of the yugala aspect, that, whether one has full devotion or not, it pours an abundant shower of love on one's heart, were it even the adamantine heart of a great sinner,[3] and makes the tree of Parabrahmatattva,[4] which is love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, blossom, flower, and bear fruit thereon.

"O you discriminating Vaiṣṇava! How dare you extend your authority over Viṣṇu, after whose name you are called a Vaiṣṇava, and who is your authority in everything? Being the servant of Viṣṇu's servant's servant, what makes you so proud that you insult the Devatā whom Viṣṇu adores? You would not admit the superiority of any over the Devatā you worship. Very well. But ought you, on that account, to divide one thing into two parts, and attribute lordship to one and servitude to another? Why should you call Rādhā Kṛṣṇa's handmaid instead of Kṛṣna's own self?[5] And even should you do so in the spirit of play, why do you not also call Kṛṣṇa Rādhā's servant, just as you call Rādhā Kṛṣṇa's handmaid? Or do you think that Kṛṣṇa's lordship cannot be maintained without calling Rādhā His handmaid? Is this your idea of Kṛṣṇa's Brahmanhood? He who is the Lord will always be so, whether Rādhā becomes His handmaid or not. O brother, you proceed to establish Kṛṣṇa's lordship on Rādhā's servitude; you proceed to worship the adored Devatā of Kṛṣṇa with food first offered to Him. But you do not even once desire to understand why you are in such a miserable plight in spite of your worship of Kṛṣṇa? Why are

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[1] Premamayī. [2] In which both Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā are combined.
[3] Literally, "heretic" (pāṣaṇḍa).
[4] The tree which symbolizes the Parabrahman. [5] Svarūpa.

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you not saved in spite of the presence of the Lord, the Saviour of the three worlds? To strike with a weapon the left limb of Him whose right limb you worship! Ah we know not whether, in consequence of such worship, Bhagavān will gratify you by appearing before you, or greet you with His Sudarśana.[1] Friend of the poor! Merciful Deva! Thou alone art the Saviour of the three worlds, Thou art ever the reliever of burdens of the earth.

"Lord, save the community of Sādhakas from these false beliefs. Or, O Lord, it is miserliness shown by your self of your own accord. It is because Thou, O Kṛṣṇa, art unwilling to make the being[2] of Rādhā in which Thou hast sunk and lost Thyself the property of all, that Thou, O crest-gem of schemers,[3] hast turned the wheel of the intelligence of Jīvas. So I say, O discriminating Vaiṣṇava, if your understanding of the subject is of a dualistic character, then understand this also, that it is doubtful whether even after a hundred crores[4] of births, you will be able to worship Her whose worshipper Kṛṣṇa Himself is."

Amongst those who, by throwing all these thorns upon the spiritual path, consider themselves to be learned,[5] there are some who are even heard to say that śakti can exist only by the support[6] of the possessor of śakti, and therefore ask what is the necessity of worshipping the thing supported instead of the supporter ?

Sādhakas have already been given ample evidence to show the nature of relation of the supporter and the supported, between the possessor of śakti and Śakti. What new answer can we now give to the above question? If, however, the matter must be judged from the point of view of the supporter and the supported, then, leaving aside considerations of śakti-tattva, we see that Brahmā is supported by a swan,[7] Viṣṇu is supported by Garuḍa, Mahādeva is supported by a bull, and the Devī is supported by a lion. Should we, then, for this reason ignore Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and Maheśvarī, and worship the swan, Garuda, the bull, and the lion, in the belief that as supporters they are more

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[1] The discus of Viṣṇu. [2] Tattva. [3] Cakrī.
[4] 1,000,000,000. [5] Pandit. [6] Āśraya.
[7] Hamsa, or some say goose, duck, or flamingo.

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important of the two? The relation between the possessor of śakti and Śakti is the same as that which exists between the carrier[1] and the person carried. This is the only fit reply to a fit question.

In reality, there are no such two things as Śakti and possessor of śakti. There is no evidence of, nor is there any necessity for, the existence of the two things. Male, female, and neuter, all are Śakti. Body, senses, mind, and Ātmā, all are manifestations[2] of śakti. Citśakti[3] as Ātma is, like the solar orb, the condensed and massive form of śakti; while body, senses, mind, and other things are, like sun's rays spreading on all sides, but fluid parts of that great massive śakti. Although the sun is in reality energy[4] in substance, yet for common understanding such expressions as "the sun is possessed of energy" and "the sun's energy" are used. Similarly, although Ātmā is Śakti itself in substance, yet in order that Jīva may the better understand, Śāstra has used such expressions as "Ātmā is possessed of śakti" and "Ātmā's śakti". This is the only difference between Śakti and the possessor of śakti. In a spiritual sense, nothing exists as possessor of śakti besides Śakti.

Even the Puruṣa-form,[5] which you and I, according to our language and understanding, know as the possessor of śakti, is but another or changed[6] form of Prakṛti. Other evidence is unnecessary. Parameśvara himself, the sole and best Puruṣa in the world,[7] who presides or dwells in all Puruṣas, has said in the Nirvāṇa Tantra:

"Just as trees grow on the earth and again disappear in it; just as bubbles are formed in water and again disappear in water; just as lightning is formed in clouds and again disappears in them; so at the time of creation Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, and other Devas are born of the body of that beginningless and eternal Kālīkā, and at the time of dissolution they again disappear in Her. O Devī, for this reason, so long as Jīva does not know the supreme truth[8] in regard to Her who plays with Mahākāla,[9]

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[1] Vāhana.
[2] Vibhūti.
[3] See *ante*.
[4] Tejas.
[5] Mūrti.
[6] Vikṛti.
[7] Jagadekapuruṣottama.
[8] Tattva.
[9] Mahākālavilāsini.

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his desire for liberation can only give rise to ridicule. From a part only of Kālīkā, the primordial Śakti, arises Brahmā, from a part only arises Janārdana, and from a part only arises Śambhu. O fair-eyed Devī, just as rivers and lakes are unable to traverse a vast sea—that is to say, however strong their currents may be, they all lose their individual existence entering into the vast womb of the sea—so Brahmā and other Devas lose their separate existence on entering into the untraversable and infinite being of Mahākālī. Compared with the vast sea of the being of Kālī, the existence of Brahmā and other Devas is nothing but such little water as is contained in the hollow made by a cow's hoof. Just as it is impossible for a hollow made by a cow's hoof to form a notion of the unfathomable depth of a sea, so it is impossible for Brahmā and other Devas to have a knowledge of the nature[1] of Kālī. (For Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara are the presiding Devas of the three periods of creation, preservation, and dissolution; but who can master with his intellect the nature[1] of that Kālī with whose playful glance even Mahākāla, to whom the three periods of time are but three twinkles of His three eyes, appears at one moment and disappears at another?). Neither Brahmā, nor Viṣṇu, nor Maheśvara knows Her fully."

"They, too, are born at the beginning of creation as Lords of creation, preservation, and destruction, and again disappear in Her at the time of dissolution. For this reason Her Puruṣa appearances[2] can lead only to svarga and other regions.[3] There is none other but Herself who can grant nirvāṇa liberation. The south is the region where Yama, who awards punishment to sinners, presides. Even if a great sinner, trembling with fear of death, utters but once the name of Kālī while passing towards that south, the holder of the rod of punishment[4] becomes frightened by the (tremendous force of the Brahmāṇḍa piercing) name of Brahman,[5] and flees to all the quarters (forsaking his own place of rule, the southern region). The inhabitants of

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[1] Tattva.
[2] Mūrti.
[3] Loka. Only the Brahmamayī can give liberation (Mukti).
[4] Yama-daṇḍadhara.
[5] Kālī.

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the three worlds, therefore, sing Her name as 'Dakṣiṇā[1] Kālī' (the Dispeller of the fear of the south). Or She is called Dakṣiṇā[2] Kālī, because She is dakṣiṇā or skilful in creating and destroying even Mahākāla, the Puruṣa, who is above guṇas."

Vikṛti alone appears and disappears, while Prakṛti[3] is eternally unchanging. Bhagavān, therefore, has again said: "It is only when Prakṛti attains the state of Vikṛti that She sees the three worlds (fashioned by Herself); and again when Vikṛti attains the state of Prakṛti, She does not see anything (for, She then exists in the form of Kaivalya"[4])—that is to say, when Vikṛti in the form of the dualistic Brahmāṇḍa disappears in the womb of Prakṛti, that monistic Prakṛti alone exists in whose womb the Brahmāṇḍa is contained, and consequently, nothing remains to be seen but Herself. In another place the Śāstra has clearly said: "Puruṣa is but a Vikṛti[5] of Prakṛti."

In the Śāktamālā Candrikā it is said: "Brahmā is Śakti, Śiva is Śakti, Viṣṇu also is Śakti, and Vāsava[6] is Śakti. Śakti is at the root of all the many other Devas. Without Śakti none is able to preserve his individual existence. O Thou who possesseth a high mind, know, therefore, that Śakti is the greatest of all."

In the Brahmāṇḍa Tantra it is said: "Amongst Vaiṣṇavas some meditate upon that great Śakti as Kṛṣṇa, two-armed and beautiful with a dark[7] complexion, and others as the husband of Lakṣmī, four-armed and tranquil. She whom some Śaivas see as five-headed, naked as space, and holding the trident; and others as four-headed, one-headed, and so on, according to different forms of meditation—that great Devī Prakṛti inhabits the region[8] of Brahma-tejas.[9] Great yogīs, by single-minded practice of the yoga of devotion,[10] see that Prakṛti alone behind all things. Just as one single sun is reflected in thousands and thousands of forms in mirrors, so one single Prakṛti is reflected

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[1] Southern. The south is the region of death. [2] Skilful.
[3] The true nature, as compared with its changing transformations or "corruptions" (vikṛti).
[4] The state of liberation from all phenomenal existence.
[5] Evolved form (*vide ante*).
[6] Indra. [7] Śyāma. [8] Maṇḍala.
[9] The glorious luminous energy, which is Brahman. [10] Bhakti.

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in infinite forms in Her own māyā. Just as in spite of the existence of different upādhis,[1] by which space[2] is known according as it is space in a pot,[3] space in a room,[4] space reflected in water,[5] extensive space,[6] and so on, there is in reality no difference in space; so in spite of the existence of infinite different forms,[7] there is in reality no difference in Her who is infinity itself. That one sole Mahāvidya fills the universe.[8] The names only are different."

The Kūrma Purāṇa says: "The truth, which is the conclusion of all Brahmavādins[9] in the Vedas and Vedāntas, is that which yogīs see as one all-pervading, subtle, attributeless, motionless, and fixed. That is the supreme state of Mahādevī. What yogīs see as endless, unwasting, sole, pure Parabrahman, that is the supreme state of Mahādevī. That eternal existence,[10] higher than the highest, universal, beneficent and faultless, which is in the womb of Prakṛti, that is the highest state of Mahādevī. That which is white, spotless, pure, attributeless and non-dualistic, that which is only a matter for realization by the Ātmā, that is the highest state of Mahādevī."

The Devī's words in the same Purāṇa are: "The supreme aspect of Mine the substance of which is consciousness,[11] sole,[12] and pure; the immortal state which is free from all upādhis,[13] and eternal, that is only attainable by knowledge alone. Those who see the Ātmā as knowledge,[14] undoubtedly enter into Me."

In the Devī Āgama it is said: "That Mahāmāyā, who in reality is consciousness and Parabrahman, has assumed various forms out of favour to devotees."

The Yoginī Tantra says: "He who exists pervading the viśva (universe) as Deva Viśveśvara is Himself Viśveśvarī, the universe-pervading Devī."

"Whatever śakti anything possesses, that is Devī Viśveśvarī, and all those things are Deva Viśveśvara. She into the hollows

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1 Apparently limiting conditions.
2 Ākāśa.
3 Ghaṭākāśa.
4 Grihākāśa.
5 Jalākāśa.
6 Mahākāśa.
7 Rūpa.
8 Viśvamayī.
9 Those who speak of and worship the Brahman.
10 Tattva.
11 Cinmaya.
12 Kevala.
13 Apparent limitations, *vide ante*.
14 Jñāna.

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of whose every hair millions of Brahmāṇḍas constantly disappear; She it is who grants the desires of Sādhakas by the assumption of various forms in play (for such is Her kindness)."

In the Navaratneśvara it is said: "That Devī who is absolute existence, absolute consciousness, and absolute bliss, should be thought of as a female, or as a male, or as pure Brahman. In reality, however, She is neither male nor female, nor neuter—(that is to say, she is not bound to any particular form).

"Still, just as a kalpalatā[1] is called by a feminine name, so She, too, is called by a feminine name (Śakti—that is to say, one obtains from a kalpalatā anything which he desires, be it the fruit of a creeper (latā) or that of a tree, and this reveals a divine[2] śakti beyond that of a latā (creeper) or of a tree). Still, just as a kalpalatā is a latā (creeper) in form, so She assumes a female form,[3] in spite of Her being all forms and above all forms." Just as the form of latā (creeper) is the real form of a kalpalatā, in spite of its bearing fruits of trees, so the form of Śakti is Her real form in spite of all male appearances,[4] such as Devas, Dānavas, and so on, which are Her forms[5] only. Whether in dualistic or in non-dualistic play, in the form of Brahman or in the form of Jīva, the female is śakti, and the male is śākta. Śakti is the person worshipped, and Puruṣa is the person worshipping. This is the last step of sādhana, the highest state of spiritual realization.[6]

Although male and female are both Her aspects, yet Her śakti is naturally revealed more in the female than in the male form, and this is the cause of the distinction of worshipper and the worshipped,[7] and it is on account of this greater manifestation that females are called "śakti". From this one must not suppose that śakti is less present in such appearances[8] as Śiva, Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Gaṇeśa, and so on. For although these appearances are actually male, they are not bound to the male form. They are merely formed in the play of Her who is con-

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[1] Desire-fulfilling creeper. [2] Daiva. [3] Strīrūpadhāriṇī.
[4] Mūrti. [5] Rūpa. [6] Prāpti.
[7] The female principle is called śakti because there is more śakti revealed in it than in the male principle. As the Muṇḍamālā Tantra says, "Wherever there is a female (śakti), there I am." For the same reason the female is worshipped by the male. [8] Mūrti.

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sciousness in manifesting consciousness. If a Sādhaka who is a worshipper of the form of Kṛṣṇa desires to see Him as Kālī, then Bhagavān, the fulfiller of the desires of devotees, is bound to appear before him in that form.

Rādhikā Herself has, by pretending[1] to be afraid of Āyāna,[2] given evidence of this perfect Śakti of Bhagavān.[3] It is with reference to this force of perfect Śakti in the female form that Maheśvarī Herself has said, in the Durgāgītā of the Muṇḍamālā Tantra:

"It is I who am Rādhikā in Goloka, Kamalā in Vaikuṇṭha, and Sāvitrī and Sarasvatī, the presiding Devī of speech in Brahmaloka. It is I who am Pārvatī in Kailāśa, Jānakī in Mithilā, Rukmiṇī in Dvārakā, and Draupadī[4] in Hastināpura. I am Sandhyā[5] and Gāyatrī, the Mother of Vedas, the objects of adoration to all the twice-born people. Among Yogas[6] I am Puṣā, among flowers I am black Aparājitā,[7] among leaves I am the bael-leaf,[8] among pīṭhas I am the Yonipīṭha,[9] I am Mahāvidyā formed of Hari and Hara,[10] and I am also the worshipped of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. O Lord, O Śaṅkara,[11] it is only by my special favour that Jīvas can know me (what more need I say, O my husband!); wherever there is Śakti (a female) there I am. O Mahādeva, know for certain that this is the manner in which I am best contemplated. Whoever forsakes this path of Śakti and proceeds along another path in search of Me throws away the jewel which is in the palm of his hand, and runs after a heap of ashes."

This is the command of Śāstra. If, after this, any of you wish to solve the matter by a thorough understanding in the light of science or philosophy, in that case also it must be admitted that there is no Śakti or possessor of Śakti other than the Śakti

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[1] Abhinaya. [2] Rādhikā's husband.

[3] This point here is not at all clear. For the story is that Kṛṣṇa took the form of Kālī for fear of Āyāna.

[4] As to these names, *vide ante*.

[5] Morning, noon, and evening prayers personified (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[6] See *post*. [7] The flower clitoria. [8] Sacred to Śiva.

[9] Kamrūp, in Assam (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[10] Viṣṇu and Śiva. [11] Śiva.

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of Ātmā, by which body, senses, mind, and life[1] are guided. If everything is performed by Śakti, then why wait for a possessor of Śakti? If you ask by whose support[2] this Śakti exists, then do you yourself tell me by whose support the possessor of Śakti exists. If the Brahmaśakti who supports the Brahmāṇḍa has to wait for another's support, then this Brahmāṇḍa must go to perdition.[3] Who is the container[4] of the contained Śakti? By whose energy[5] does fire burn? By whose speed does wind blow? Such questions do not bespeak a natural state of the mind. However that may be, it is because Puruṣa is enabled by the support of Śakti to display Himself[6] that Śāstra has designated him as Śaktimān (the possessor of Śakti). The Brahmāṇḍa play of Brahmamayī manifests the same principles. For this reason, in the creation, preservation, and destruction of the dualistic material world,[7] the Puruṣa aspects of Śakti are Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, and Her Prakṛti aspects are Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Maheśvarī. In the Gāyatrī mantra also it is these two Puruṣa and Prakṛti aspects which have to be worshipped at the commencement in prāṇāyāma.[8] Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara are the Puruṣas, and at the end, in the Gāyatrī dhyāna,[9] Brahmāṇī, Vaiṣṇavī, and Maheśvarī are the Prakṛtis. The Gāyatrī is merely a Sūtra (aphorism), and the Sandhyā-prayers are its vṛtti (exposition) or Bhāṣya (commentary). In the Gāyatrī mantra five forms of Brahman's self[10] have been specified—namely, pervader of the universe,[11] creator of the world,[12] object of worship,[13] playful Deva,[14] and instigator of Jīva's intelligence.[15] Of these five, the epithet "pervader of the universe" denotes the Self-aspect,[16] and comes first. Next follows the introduction of the dualistic world. The world cannot be

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[1] Prāṇa. [2] Āśraya. [3] Rasātala. [4] Ādhāra. [5] Tejas.
[6] *Lit.:* to spread his own vibhūtis (see *post*).
[7] Prapañca. [8] Breath-control (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[9] The formula of meditation on the Gāyatri. [10] Svarūpa.
[11] Bhūrbhuvah suvah. [12] Tatsavituh. [13] Vareṇyam Bhargah.
[14] Devasya dhīmahi. The Deva is described in the text as playful (līlāmaya), for līlā is a characteristic of Devas.
[15] Dhiyo yo nah pracodayāt (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*). The Sanskrit in notes 10 to 14 are the portions of the Gāyātrī referred to, though not expressed, in the text. [16] Svarūpa.

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created in the attributeless state, and without fully bringing into play the three guṇas. By whom will He be worshipped if no worshipper exists? Play[1] is impossible if no desire exists. Lastly, why should He direct Jīva's intelligence if He has not taken upon Himself the lordship of the Brahmāṇḍa? Intelligent Brāhmaṇas will now understand from the Gāyatrī mantra itself whether the Devatā, who forms its subject,[2] is attributeless Brahman or with attribute. Brahman, whom the Gāyatrī seeks to establish, is neither attributeless nor with attribute—that is to say, It is both attributeless and with attribute. A Sādhaka, when he has attained siddhi in the sādhana of Brahman with attribute will, in natural course, lose himself in the attributeless Self.[3] He need not before this time shut his eyes and see darkness for three ages.[4] By Brahman with attribute you and I may understand a small Brahman. But in the eyes of the Śāstra, Brahman is neither small nor great, as you think.

As an aquatic animal must pass through the rivers if it wishes to journey to the sea, so a Jīva must pass through the dualistic world if he wishes to make his way to the Brahman. Śāstra has, therefore, said that to reach mahānirvāṇa, which is His attributeless aspect, one must proceed by the aid of the support of His forms[5] with attributes. By the term "attributeless" one is not to understand that Brahman has no attribute,[6] but that, although with attributes,[7] He is not attached[8] to them. The Sea is not waterless. But as, notwithstanding its fullness of water, it is the Lord or presiding Devatā over waters, so Brahman, with attribute or attributeless, is, notwithstanding such attributes, Lord or presiding Devatā over attributes. Every attribute bears eternal evidence of the infinite number of attributes of Her in Whom are all attributes.[9]

To say, therefore, that She is attributeless is only to show one's ignorance. The manifestations of Śakti in the forms[10] of Devas, Dānavas, and men, signify nothing but the spread[11] of attributes belonging to Her who holds the three guṇas. Attach-

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[1] Līlā. [2] Pratipādya. [3] Svarūpa.
[4] That is, he has not got to wait, but the result follows immediately.
[5] Mūrti. [6] Guṇa. [7] Guṇamaya. [8] Lipta.
[9] Guṇamayī. [10] Mūrti. [11] Vistāra.

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ment, inclination, permanence, peace, self-control, patience, error, enjoyment, liberation, devotion, and the like are all nothing but Śakti. Thanks, then, to the tongue of him who says that She is unconscious, She in whose substance hearing, thinking, going, seeing, and other acts of consciousness exist. Whether a person who asks if he has got a tongue has really got it or not, will be understood by others if not by himself. But he too, ought to understand this much, that if he has not got a tongue, with whose help, then, does he ask: "Have I got a tongue?"

Similarly, an advocate of the theory that Śakti is unconscious,[1] ought at least to ask himself under whose influence earthly Jīvas become conscious? If Śakti be not really consciousness, by whose grace do I possess the power of asking whether Śakti is conscious or unconscious? I know not what severe punishment for terrible crimes committed in previous births it is which smites a man so senseless as to cause him to make so delirious a statement as that "Śakti is unconscious". He is saying that of a Śakti the beams of the moon of whose consciousness are powerfully manifested in every vein, every artery, and in every atom of a Jīva's body. Śāstra has said: "O Devī, without a knowledge of Śakti nirvāṇa cannot be attained." Do you think, O Jīva! that you will gain the knowledge of Śaktitattva which leads directly to nirvāṇa liberation, merely by virtue of your being a great polemist, and without the possession of a wealth of sādhana stored by in many previous births?

Are you to possess the wealth which is worshipped by Brahmā and other Devas—the treasure which lies eternally hidden in the storehouse of Sadānanda's heart? Hari, Hari, Hari? You and I want to obtain Her by the force of intelligence, but we fail to realize that we have not the power to understand anything beyond what She, who is the intelligence of even intelligence, has with proper judgement, given us the competence to understand. Not to speak of anyone else, even Śaṅkarācārya himself, O Sādhaka, played at this sport.

When Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya, upholder of the māyā doctrine, preacher of the Vedānta philosophy, and crest-gem

[1] Jaḍa.

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of philosophers, arrived at Kāśī after having proved himself a conqueror in every quarter; when followers of other systems of philosophy, wounded all over by the powerful arrows of his arguments, had been dispersed and scattered, he, by some play of the Mother of the world which we know not of, commenced to the immense joy of the Śaiva community, to hurl relentless thunderbolts on the heart of the Śākta community. For he proceeded to establish that "nothing exists as Śakti" besides Śiva. Śāktas thus sorely oppressed by him, though defeated outwardly by arguments, were undefeated in inner reasoning. They were, however, intensely grieved to see such scepticism[1] proclaimed against the Devatā whom they worshipped. Who but She who dwells in all hearts can realize the intensity of such grief in the hearts of Sādhakas? Śaṅkarācārya, however, could not understand this even then; for his ideas did not go beyond the notion that "Kāśī[2] belonged to Śiva." It was even then unknown to him that there was also a Mistress[3] of Kāśī. The throne of Her who is Śakti in reality, was therefore moved to appease the pangs of the hearts of Sādhakas, and to lift the curtain of error which had fallen upon Śaṅkarācārya, the incarnation of all devotion.[4]

One day, therefore, Śaṅkarācārya, after an untiring discussion lasting till midday, lay with a wearied body on the Maṇikarṇikā ghāt, enjoying in his mind his triumph in having disproved the Śakti doctrine.[5] He then saw a girl of serene appearance slowly approaching the ghāt,[6] carrying a small pitcher on her lap. Śaṅkaracārya was lying with his head towards the south and feet towards the north, in such a way as to completely block the path. On coming near him, the girl very meekly said: "Bhagavān, please raise your feet so that I may fill my pitcher with water and go away." Śaṅkarācārya said: "Mother, you may step over me. There will be no blame in your doing so." The girl replied: "How can that be? You are a Brāhmaṇa. How can I step over you?" Śaṅkarācārya, proud

[1] Nāstikavāda.
[2] The city of Benares.
[3] Adhīśvarī.
[4] Bhaktāvatāra.
[5] Śaktivāda.
[6] Steps leading down to the river.

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of his knowledge, said: "Mother, you are an ignorant female, and in that a mere girl. Brāhmaṇa, Kṣattriya, Vaiśya, Śūdra, female, male—all such differences merely arise from our ignorance.[1] In the eyes of the wise everything is, in a spiritual sense, in substance, Brahman. You may pass over me, and will commit no sin thereby." The girl looked greatly grieved, and said: "Lord, you yourself have said that I am an ignorant female, and have no competence for such spiritual knowledge.[2] I can by no means step over a Brāhmaṇa. Be good enough to raise your feet so that I may pass." Śaṅkarācārya was displeased, and said: "Mother, I have repeatedly told you what to do, and yet you will not hear me? My body is extremely tired, and, moreover, suddenly I feel, I know not why, as if I had not the śakti (strength) even to raise my feet." The girl, who appeared to be somewhat frightened, said: "Lord, pardon me. Had I but known that you had not the śakti to do so, I would never have asked you to raise your feet. I am one who is not fit to understand your spiritual knowledge, and have, in consequence, disturbed you repeatedly through my great fear at having to step over a Brāhmaṇa. Had you, instead of speaking of spiritual knowledge, told me, at the beginning, plainly that 'you had not the śakti to move,' I would myself have raised your feet and gone down to the water. However that may be, if you will now let me, I shall myself raise your feet." Śaṅkarācārya was greatly abashed at these words of the girl, and said: "You may do what you like." The girl then raised his feet with her own hands and put them aside, and then went down to the water, filled the pitcher, and ascended the steps. Śaṅkarācārya, who was lying prostrate with fatigue, called to the girl, and said: "Mother, I have been long thirsty, give me a little water." The girl smiled, and asked: "Why? You are lying on the water-side. How is it, then, that you suffer from thirst?" Śaṅkarācārya replied: "How many times more need I tell you that I have not the śakti to rise?" The girl then rolled her eye,[3] and making the banks of the Ganges resound with Her solemn voice, said:

[1] Ajñāna.
[2] Tattva-jñāna.
[3] In surprise and resentment.

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"Śaṅkara, is it not you who ignore Śakti?" Wounded by the echo of that heartpenetrating solemn sound, Śaṅkarācātya, who had been like a sleeping child startled by lightning, shut his eyes for a moment, and then, as he fearfully opened them, he saw that in the angry eyes of the girl waves of unbearable light, such as might proceed from hundreds of suns and moons, were playing. Instantly, as he cried "Mother!" and with outstretched arms rushed to clasp Her feet, the play of that playful Devī closed. The great light of Her who is Light itself,[1] which had shown itself in the form of a girl, disappeared. None but a kindred sufferer can understand the darkness into which Śaṅkarācārya sank upon the disappearance of that light. The summit of pride of Brahmajñāna[2] to which he had risen was shattered into pieces by a single glance of the daughter of the King of Mountains,[3] as the summit of a mountain is shattered by a thunderbolt. Then, like a blind man who has fallen, like a child which has lost its mother, he wept loudly, and crying, "O my Mother, where have you gone?" ran with breathless speed towards the temple of Annapūrṇā. Now the mother's son belongs to the Mother, and goes to the Mother's temple crying, "Mother!" Although there was nothing strange in this, yet the sight of such an unprecedented change in Śaṅkarācārya, the sceptic about Śakti, charmed the Śāktas with the greatness of the Mother. The temple-yard was filled with their cry: "Victory to the Mother of the world." Surrounded on all sides by the assembly of Śākta devotees, Śaṇkarācārya came to the door of the temple of the Rājarājeśvarī[4] of the three worlds, the Queen[5] of the Lord[6] of Kāśī, and, trembling with fear at having committed so grave an offence, placed his head on the shrine of the feet touched by the heads of Suras and Asuras, of Ādyā Śakti, the Mother of the world. Then, weeping, he said: "O Mother, Śiva is able to maintain His Lordship only if He is united with Śakti; otherwise (if He is separated from Śakti) He is unable not merely to maintain His Lordship, but even (to maintain His own existence) to

[1] Jyotirmayī. [2] Knowledge of Brahman.
[3] The Devī, who had thus appeared to the philosopher.
[4] Queen of Queens. [5] Adhīśvarī. [6] Īśvara.

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move His eyes. Explained in another way: According to Tantra, Śakti is denoted by the letter 'i'.[1] Śiva is Śiva so long only as He is joined with Śakti—that is, with 'i'. The instant He is separated from Śakti—that is, from 'i'—He ceases to be Śiva, and becomes a motionless Śava (corpse). Thou art, therefore (Ādyā Śakti) an object of worship to even Hari, Hara, Viriñci,[2] and others who are themselves worshipped by the world. O Mother, how am I, who have done no act of religious merit, able to bow my head to, or hymn the feet (the lotus-feet, difficult of attainment by the three worlds, at which Brahma and other Devas lay their heads)—that is to say, unless Thou thyself reveal it, who has the power to know the Śakti-tattva, which is in reality Thyself? Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, who know but a part only of Thy greatness, have sought shelter at Thy feet. That tattva is not revealed to any who have not a store of religious merits acquired by Sādhana in many a previous birth. It is not within the power of Jīvas to know the nature of Tārā,[3] who is beyond the reach of mind and speech. It is therefore that a Jīva fails to know Thee, O Mother, even though he lies on Thy lap. O Mother, such is my state to-day. Out of fear of the offence I have committed, I have not the courage either to make hymn or to bow to Thee."

In this manner Śaṅkarācārya made hymn to the Mother of the world by one hundred and three verses, in which he described Her appearance, qualities, and greatness. In the conclusion he said: "To make hymn to Thee with words uttered by Thy grace is like the waving of lights[4] before the sun in his worship, or the preparation of Arghya[5] for the moon with the particles of water secreted by a moon-gem,[6] or the offering of libations of its own water to the sea."

Thus gratified, Śaṅkarācārya made provision so that none among the descendants of his disciples might ever be deprived of

[1] Called Vāmākṣi or Vāmanetra (left eye), also Ratī.

[2] Viṣṇu, Śiva, Brahmā.

[3] That is, the tattva of Tārā, one of the Mahāvidyās (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[4] Ārati, or the waving of lights in worship before an image.

[5] An offering made to show respect to a person on meeting him, or to a Devatā. [5] Candrakānta maṇi.

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the wealth of the Sādhana of Śakti, or fall from Tāntrik initiation, notwithstanding that they were Sannyāsins in the Vaidik cult. For this reason we see the Yantra of Śrī[1] established wherever there are Maṭhas,[2] temples, and the like, founded amongst such Daṇḍis[3] as are followers of Śaṅkarācārya. This fact people daily see even at the present time, except that it is in some places openly displayed, and in some places kept secret as Sādhakas, who know the secret, are fully aware.

However that may be, we have something to say about the spiritual error of Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya, an incarnation of Śaṅkara, in the incident described above. Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya was an incarnation of Śiva, who is Śakti Herself. It is extremely astonishing that He who has in His original form laid His breast under the feet of Mahāśakti, and sunk in Brahma-bliss by resigning Himself to the Brahma-form of Brahmamayī, should, in His incarnate form, commit such an error in respect of Śakti-tattva. We are therefore led to think that it was in order to shatter the pride of knowledge, consisting of eternal ignorance, which filled the followers of the Vedāntik system of philosophy, who were advocates of the Māyā doctrine,[4] deluded by the Māyā of Mahāmāyā, that he first ignored the existence of Her who is perfect and eternal Brahman, and then proclaimed the greatness of the Mother of the world by holding, through Her grace, the ever-triumphant banner of the Tantra Śāstra in his own hand. Otherwise, it is not to be believed that the author of the hymn of which we have quoted the beginning and the end, and which bespeaks a deep and impressive knowledge of the entire Tantra Śāstra, was a disbeliever in Śakti, or did not know or worship Her.

Gaura Candra,[5] the full-moon of the Sea of Gaura,[6] descending upon Navadvīpa,[7] also belonged to a branch of Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya's followers. His Guru who initiated him in

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[1] The Devī.
[2] Monastic establishments.
[3] A high class of Sannyāsins.
[4] The Māyāvāda, which speaks of Māyā as Avidyā only, and not (ignoring the true nature of Śakti) as both Vidya and Avidyā.
[5] The Vaiṣṇavite Saint Caitanya.
[6] The country Gaur or Bengal.
[7] The town of Nadia, where Caitanya was born.

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asceticism,[1] was Swāmī Keśava Bhāratī, a disciple in the line of the disciples of the Śaṅkara community. Intelligent Sādhakas will, therefore, easily understand in what system Gaura Candra was initiated and according to which he was accustomed to worship. Still, we shall try to deal with this subject in its proper place, so far as it will lie in our power.

Sādhaka, whom shall I recognize as a greater philosopher than Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya, who played his part in the above-mentioned sport? Where is the advocate of the theory that Śakti is unconscious,[2] who is himself thereby lowered to the state of some unconscious thing, whose words I shall respect? If Śaṅkarācārya, an incarnation of Him who possesses all Śaktis, lost the power (śakti) of raising his feet because he said, "There is no Śakti," who are you and I that we should raise our heads to say, "There is no Śakti"?

He is very deeply mistaken who thinks that he can understand the Śakti-tattva by means of philosophical arguments, discussions, and reasonings. If She were a treasure to be acquired by arguments, discussions, and reasonings, for whose sake, then, are sādhana and bhajana[3] required? Śaṅkarācārya did not know Her by means of philosophy (darśana). He knew Her in consequence of seeing Her (darśana).[4] He was not a blind philosopher, like the pandits we meet nowadays. His spiritual eye was painted and made brilliant by the collyrium paint[5] of the light of Her who is ever stainless.[6] The Mother of the world showed Herself to him, and that sight (darśana) made him (one who sees or) a philosopher (dārśanik). But we unfortunate Jīvas of the Kali age are becoming blind in the name of philosophy (darśana). This is our ill-fortune.[7]

Is he not the greatest of sceptics[8] who finds it in him to say that Śakti "does not exist"—the Śakti whose existence has given to Bhagavān the name of "possessor of all Śaktis"? What can

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[1] Sannyāsa. [2] Jaḍa.
[3] Worship. [4] A play on the word "darśana".
[5] Añjana used to give brilliance to the eyes. [6] Nirañjana.
[7] A play on the word darśana. Philosophy is so called, as it is supposed to give sight; but is here the cause of blindness.
[8] Literally, the great-grandfather of sceptics.

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be a greater folly than that you, O Jīva, should proceed to discuss the existence or non-existence of the Śakti, whose greatness is preached by Bhagavān; the Śakti whose greatness is such that Bhagavān Himself has, in order that it may be proclaimed, ordained that the name of Śakti should be uttered first, and then that of the possessor of śakti, declaring that he who shall fail to utter the names as Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, Umā-Maheśvara, Gaurī-Śaṅkara,[1] and Sītā-Rāma is guilty of a sin as great as that of murdering a Brāhmaṇa. In the uncrossable ocean of Her existence a Brahmāṇḍa-cauldron is less even than a bubble of water.[2]

Is it the Mother's fault or the son's ill-fortune that living in that bubble and even sinking in that ocean, you and I do not see Her; that sitting in the Mother's lap, nourished by the Mother's milk, and tended by the soft fingers of the Mother's hand, the son, born blind, does not see Her? Who does not take birth in his Mother's womb? But for that reason everyone does not have the good fortune of seeing his mother. The graceful and refulgent beauty of the three eyes[3] of the three-eyed Devī are reflected in the mirror of the eye of him only whose eye of knowledge has been opened by Her mercy, and has been smeared by his guru's kindness with the collyrium paint of love. Śaṅkarācārya has said: "What power has Jīva to see that beauty of Thine, which is visible only to Paramaśiva?"

So I say, O brother Sādhaka, do not forget the Mother's authority and power because you have not yourself got the power to see Her. And you, community of false devotees, who see a difference between Śakti and possessor of śakti, who are partial on the Father's side and inimical to the Mother's side, to you, too, I say, whichever form a Jīva may worship, be it the form of a male or that of a female, the door of liberation is free to him.

He who worships the Father has not to wait to worship the Mother before he can secure liberation; but know it for certain

[1] That is, the names of the Śaktis are placed first, and those of the Devas second.

[2] The universe, which is shaped like a cauldron, is but as a bubble in the limitless ocean of Her being.

[3] Including the central eye of wisdom.

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that not even the Father's father has the power to liberate him who worships the Father in a spirit of antagonism to the Mother. Śumbha, Niśumbha, Jambha, Mahiṣāsura,[1] and many others, worshipped the Father in this spirit. But I know not how vast is the mercy of Her who is full of mercy. Enmity cannot touch Her in the least, so that the Devī with dishevelled hair, whom immortals worship, liberated them from the bonds of existence even when in war with them. Nevertheless, by placing Himself in the form of a corpse under the Mother's feet, the Father showed to the Daityas that the garland of pearls of liberation lies ever set and ever stored under the feet of the Devī with dishevelled hair. To put on that garland one must place one's heart under those feet and lose one's self. It is with the view of this truth[2] that thoughtful devotees of subtle insight have said: "Everyone says 'Father, Father!' no one says 'Mother!' But in the Father's court[3] the final decision is that which is the Mother's command."

So I say: "O you who discriminate between the Father and the Mother, human birth is difficult of attainment. Open, then, the door of your heart while there is yet time, and with tears in your eyes say for once.

" 'A bad son may sometimes be born
But a bad mother never.' "[4]

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[1] Daityas or demonic beings so named (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra* and *ante.*)

[2] Tattva.

[3] Durbar or court held by Rājas etc.

[4] Kuputro jayeta kvachedapi kumātā nabhavati. This is a quotation from Śaṅkarācārya's hymn "Devyaparādhaksamāpana stora," translated in A. and E. Avalon's "Hymns to the Goddess".

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CHAPTER X

WORSHIP OF THE FIVE DEVATĀS

BRAHMAN with attributes is the object of adoration in the Gāyatrī worship already mentioned, although attributeless Brahman is the goal. That worship, however, is sufficient and adequate only for the sandhyā-prayers[1] said thrice a day. The sandhyā-prayers may be the only and highest form of worship for him who, disregarding the dualistic Brahmāṇḍa, has profoundly understood the monistic truth, and lost all false dualistic notions concerning the body, senses, mind, and life. Although in the ācamana[2] of sandhyā, there is something of self-resignation which belongs to the province of dualistic perception, yet that is intended only for the casting off of sin. For this reason, this part may be called self-purification instead of self-resignation. However that may be, the loving heart of a devotee cannot rest satisfied with this part only. The sandhyā cannot gratify the heart's desire of Him whose earnest wish is to place everything which he can call his own at Her feet, and to be taken as a slave in return for Her love.

From the Gāyatrī I learn that Mahāśakti, under the aspects of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara, is the creatrix, preservatrix, and destructrix according to differences which exist between the three guṇas of sattva, rajas, and tamas, But this amount of understanding does not satisfy the mind and heart. Why this play of Hers? What is the process by which this play is regulated? What was Her true aspect[3] before this play, and what will Her aspect be after it? Being Herself full of play,[4] how is She detached from it? How can Jīva, who is but a mere puppet, pass beyond this play and enter into Her real Self? A Jīva's heart is naturally anxious to have the answer to these and other questions.

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[1] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*
[2] A portion of the sandhyā ritual (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*)
[3] Svarūpa. [4] Līlāmayī.

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Secondly, suppose that I understand from the Gāyatrī as much as I can of these matters.[1] I then understand that She is pure Brahman whose substance is existence, consciousness, and bliss. But what do I gain by that? I am an impure, unconscious[2] Jīva. I hear that the sea contains innumerable gems. But what is that to me? The gems of the sea are in the sea, and my poverty is in me. So long as I do not secure those gems in my own hand, it will not end my miseries to hear or know of them. So long as I do not see Her with my eyes and bless myself by holding Her to my breast, there is no peace for me. I am therefore in want of a means whereby I can secure Her. I shall do so the day on which my egoism will be destroyed by the intense fire[3] of spiritual knowledge. But my gross intellect, mind, and life are not satisfied with such a subtle form of attainment. I am a Jīva with ten senses, and possessed of mind and life, and these things form the only hope and support of my egoism. I want a suitable way of obtaining Her without losing these things. Ātmā has never any happiness or sorrow.

My samsāra exists in order to make the mind happy. If I cannot make that mind happy, if I am only to meet Her after the mind is dead, then it is the same to me whether I meet Her at all or not. And if the mind is to die, with whom will that meeting take place?[4] This, too, is a serious problem. For this reason I want Her whom my mind wants. This is no doubt a very great expectation. But what can I do? I shall not be able to make my mind suited to Her, so that She must make Herself suited to my mind, for She or He is possessed of all śaktis. Mind is not able to suit itself to Her, for She is beyond the reach of mind--that is to say, mind cannot see Her or become suited to Her by its own power. But She dwells in everything and sees everything, so that it is neither impossible nor astonishing for Her to become suited to the mind as She sees it. For my mind is happy if it can form a samsāra with the senses. Its concern is with happiness, and it is as much ready to form a samsāra

[1] Tattvas.
[2] Jaḍa—that is here, spiritually unconscious.
[3] Tejas.
[4] *Cf.* the saying: "I do not want to be sugar, but to eat it."

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with persons who are in no way connected with it, provided it can be happy with them, as it is to forsake father, mother, wife, and son, if it does not get happiness from them. If, therefore, it obtains happiness,—that is to say, if the senses which are its limbs obtain objects upon which they can function; if the eye can see Her; if the ear can hear Her words; if the skin can touch Her; if in this manner and in every way She can provide happiness to the mind, the life, the body, and the senses; if by withdrawing all the functions of the senses to the mind[1] She can immerse them in the sea of joy along with the mind—then the mind may forsake father, mother, wife, son, and others, and live as in a samsāra with Her.

If it is happy, why should it consider as to who is its own, and who is not its own? To judge of happiness by relationship is not a sure mode of judgement. On the contrary, relationship should be judged by happiness. It is because happiness is concerned that She, who has no connection with even seven generations above me, is my (better) half. This is an instance of a person's happiness in the samsāra. If the mind in the samsāra loves to be occupied with the samsāra, then why not form that samsāra with Her? She then becomes father, mother, wife, son, friend, and companion. Devotion, respect, affection, and love, whatever I have to bestow on Her. If I can be happy by feeding, clothing, and decking Her, just as one is said to be happy in this samsāra by feeding, clothing, and decking one's children; if the samsāra can be kept up with Her in this manner, then it will not be long before the mind is made suited to Her—that is, just as She would have it to be.[2]

But in order thus to make my mind suited to Her, it is necessary that She should first be suited to my mind. It will

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[1] That is, withdraw the senses from external objects and concentrate them in the mind, in order that supersensual perception may be had of Her. The senses are the effects of the mind, and can be withdrawn into it by yoga, when the Jīva acquires the power of spiritual perception.

[2] If the sādhaka's samsāra consists of Her alone—that is to say, if he is occupied with nothing but Her—then the frame of his mind will easily become what She likes, so that he may be in a position to enjoy Her company constantly.

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not do for Her to remain sitting in the orb of Sūrya[1] or the sphere of Āgni,[2] but She must come and sit in the circle[3] of my heart. I shall not be able to contemplate different forms of Her at different times—*viz.*, three forms[4] in three sandhyās. She must remain for ever fixed in one form, whether standing, sitting, or in any other posture. It will not do that I shall meet Her in three sandhyās during daytime, but never during the night. Like the flow of the Ganges towards the sea, the flow of my sight towards Her will be uninterrupted. Whatever else may cross my sight, it will turn only towards Her.

Unless I desire, all distinctions of time, space, and person will cease to exist. In whatever state, under whatever circumstances I may live, in happiness or in sorrow, in prosperity or in adversity, my life will encircle Her beauteous feet. If, answering these expectations of mine, You first make yourself suited to my mind, then I shall make myself suited to Your mind. It is in order to fulfil these loving expectations of the Sādhaka, that She who is perfect and eternal Brahman has provided for Tāntrik initiation in addition to initiation in the Gāyātrī. And Her mercy appears all the more from the fact that even those who have no competency[5] for initiation in the Gāyatrī have been made eligible by Her for Tāntrik initiation. All persons, and whether men or women, are equally eligible for it. This Door of liberation is ever free to the access of even the basest and lowest born Caṇḍāla.[6]

We do not observe distinction of caste when stepping into a ferry boat; no distinction is made between sinful and virtuous men as regards bathing in the Ganges; and no distinction exists between unmoving objects, moving objects, insects, and the like dying in the region of Benares in respect of their right to Nirvāṇa liberation. In the same way in the boat in which we cross the sea of existence, in the sacred water of the Ganges of knowledge, and in the Benares of Tāntrik initiation extending over the whole Brahmāṇḍa, no bar is set against the initiation of any. In short,

[1] The sun. [2] Fire. [3] Maṇḍala.
[4] Rūpa; an allusion to the three dhyānas of the sandhyā.
[5] Adhikāra. [6] One of the lowest castes.

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just as fire will appropriate anything to itself, so the Tantra will appropriate anyone to the Brahman. The Tāntrik form of initiation is therefore an unfailing means, having no equal, for the liberation of the three worlds.

Why not, then, worship in this manner any one of the three Puruṣa aspects and the three Śakti aspects specified in the Gāyatri-tattva? There is no fear of such an objection here; for Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Śakti, and Sūrya, are the five Devatās mentioned in the Gāyatrī. Of these the worship of Brahmā, in the Tāntrik form, has been abolished by Devarṣi Nārada's curse, and in the place of Brahmā the worship of Gaṇeśa, who is an avatāra of Viṣṇu, has been established; in fact, the worship of none of these five Devatās is outside the scope of the Gāyatrī-tattva. It is, therefore, superfluous to say that it is the Devatās of worship according to the Gāyatrī-tattva who are also objects of worship according to the Tāntrik initiation.

Moreover, in the Gāyatrī Mantra five attributive epithets have been used—namely, pervader of the universe, creator of the world, object of worship, playful[1] Deva, and director of Jīva's intelligence.[2] The Śakti qualified by these five attributes is eternally seated in each one of the five Devatās of worship. The five aspects[3] are all eternal and perfect Brahman. The Śakti of will, the Śakti of action, and the Śakti of knowledge[4] are infinite and unlimited in each of them. They are all equally powerful in creating, preserving and destroying, for He is five in one and one in five. Secondly, the aspects for worship in the Gāyatrī-tattva are six,[5] while the worshipper—that is, I and my mind—are one. It is impossible for a Jīva to adore six aspects with equal love in the same mind. The love, which is to sound constantly in the mind like the note of a tamburā,[6] will be interrupted if transferred from one aspect to another. Śāstra itself has said:

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[1] Līlāmaya.

[2] See *ante*, and *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*.

[3] Mūrtis.

[4] Icchā, Kriyā, and Jñāna Śaktis (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).

[5] That is, three Puruṣa forms—Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Meheśvara—and three Śakti forms—Brahmāṇi, Vaiṣṇavī, Rudrāṇi.

[6] A stringed instrument used by singers in keeping up the note.

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"For one whose mind travels from one state[1] to another, and so on, there is no liberation, for it is impossible for such a one to perform single-minded Sādhana." Again: "From morning to evening, and from evening to morning, all that I do, O Mother of the world, is your worship." Thus, to resign oneself wholly day and night to the lotus-feet of the supreme Devatā; to be dependent on Her protection only by maintenance of an intimate relation with Her at all times, whether in adversity or in prosperity, awaking or sleeping, in life or in death; to feel truly in the heart and say, "My mind knows nothing but Thy beautiful feet"; to sink in the untraversable sea of the thought[1] that "I am Mother and the Mother is mine"—such a whole-hearted love for one cannot be formed in respect of six aspects. I know that She is one in six; but my mind cannot be two instead of one in the unbeginning and unending flow of time. How can I offer my one mind to the feet of six persons? How can I love six persons as I love my life? For this reason I must accept some one aspect as the centre of the joy of love, making it the support of my life. Though all aspects are but really Her, yet the three worlds do not possess another aspect similar to that of which the Mantra restores my life, of which the Yantra is the amulet for my safety, and of which the Tantra[2] is the occupation of my whole lifetime, whether that aspect be dark blue like crushed collyrium,[3] or fair like a mass of heated gold,[4] or white like a mountain of silver.[5] "With Thyself alone, O Mother, can Thyself be compared," and "O Mother, what Thou art to me, Thou alone art that to me." The sweetness of Her beauty is not to be judged by these physical eyes of the Jīva. Who but She, who is the only beauty in the world, and who is full of love for devotees, can say whom the eye of love will consider beautiful?[6] Here Deva[7] Hanumān, a guide[8] for the journey to the sea of

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[1] Bhāva. [2] Cult, authority.
[3] The Devī as Śyāmā, Kālī, Tārā, etc.
[4] The Devī as Umā, Gaurī, Durga, etc. [5] Śiva is thus described.
[6] That is, She determines for each devotee that which he will regard as most beautiful.
[7] Used honorifically of the monkey Hanumān, the son of Pavana.
[8] Guru; because of his great devotion of Rāmacandra.

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love, has said: "Although from the point of view of spirit there is no difference between Nārāyaṇa, the husband of Lakṣmī, and Rāmacandra the husband of Jānakī, yet lotus-eyed Rāmacandra alone is my all." That is to say, although there is no real difference between the aspects of Rāma and Nārāyaṇa, yet Rāmacandra is the full-moon of the sea of my love, and consequently there is nothing in the three worlds so charming to my mind, life, and eyes, as the aspect of lotus-eyed Rāma, fair of colour, like a young blade of grass. Bhagavān, also, is ever bound by the tender ties of this love, so dear to the Sādhaka. We therefore read in such books as the Purāṇas that whenever that incarnation of devotion, the son[1] of Pavana,[2] went to Vaikuṇṭha, Bhagavan, through love for the devotee, changed His usual aspect of Nārāyaṇa into that of Rāma, and, causing Mahālakṣmī to appear as the daughter of Janaka, sat with Her on the same seat. This love play of Brahman is fully displayed to a devotee. Bhagavān has therefore said:[3] "Any devotee who seeketh to worship with faith any such aspect, I verily bestow the unswerving faith of that man." He alone presides in all appearances.[4] He alone is the seat of all forms of love. Of whatever aspect a Sādhaka may be the worshipper, it is He alone, the only desire-gratifying tree,[5] who, by the play of the sacred fountain of his love, can cool the Jīva's heart, scorched by the threefold heat.[6] If He be attained there is no need for the protection of another. The Sādhaka has therefore loudly said, with arms thrown up in joy: "I do not wish to look at another. I do not strive for another. I do not remember another. I do not want to seek the protection of another My only prayer is that I may never forget in my heart the fair form of Tripurāsundarī."[7]

"Bhagavān Maheśvara, crowned with the cresent moon, is my refuge. Maheśvarī, the daughter of the King of Mountains,

[1] Hanumān. [2] Deva of the Wind.
[3] Bhagavadgītā, chap. vii. Śloka 21. [4] Mūrti.
[5] Kalpataru. [6] Tāpatraya, or threefold miseries (see *ante*).
[7] The Devī, so called, according to the Kālikā, Purāṇa, because She is everywhere triple, and according to the Tripurārṇava, because She dwells in the three Nāḍis (see Bhāskararāya, Comm. Lalitā, verse 125, and Benedictory Śloka.)

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is my refuge. I again say that they both form my only refuge. I will not seek the shelter of any other Devatā."

"I do not believe in any Deva whose throat is not marked with the blue stain caused by the drinking of poison,[1] whose body is not decked with ornaments of serpents; whose hand does not hold a pot made of a skull, who has not a shining eye on his forehead, whose forehead is not adorned with the crescent moon, and whose left side is unoccupied by his better half."[2] By the words "I do not believe" is not meant that I do not admit the existence of any other Deva, or that I have no love or respect for Him. What is meant is that there is no necessity for me to believe in any other Deva for the purpose of worship, for I am ever gratified with Him whom I have got. Just as a chaste woman[3] may love her husband only with a pure attachment in which none else has a share, so a Sādhaka may bestow his love for the Lord of the world on one Person only. Initiation in the Mantra of one Devatā is necessary in order that the mind and Ātmā (spirit) may have this right, and this initiation is the Tāntrik initiation.

A system of fivefold initiation is found to prevail in the families of many accomplished Sādhakas. Many people express great astonishment at this form of initiation; for it is an extremely troublesome and almost useless affair to be initiated in the Mantras of the five Devatās, Śiva, Śakti, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, and Gaṇeśa, and to attempt to worship them all with equal devotion. It is no doubt so if all of them have to be worshipped with equal devotion. But as a matter of fact, it is not a question of equal worship. The worship of every worshipper is fivefold; for in the centre of the circle is the worshipper's own Iṣṭadevatā,[4] and on each of His four sides the four other Devatās preside. The only peculiarity, in this respect, of the five fold initiation is that in this form of initiation a person takes from the mouth of his Guru the Mantras of all the five Devatās, while in other forms

[1] At the churning of the ocean (Śiva Nīlakaṇṭha).

[2] Male and female form one complete whole, of which the male is the right side, and the female the left and better half.

[3] Satī.

[4] The Devatā selected by the Sādhaka for his special worship.

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of initiation Mantras of only one Devatā are thus taken. Initiation in any one Mantra entitles a Sādhaka to all Mantras. Although want of initiation in the Mantras of all five Devatās in no way interferes with this right, yet the speciality of initiation by a Guru in all the Mantras is that this right is thereby made to bear fruit more speedily.

Secondly, in their anxiety for the welfare of their descendants, accomplished and non-discriminating[1] Sādhakas, crest-gems of Kula,[2] understood it to be great imprudence to allow of the possibility of their families being ruined through the great sin of bearing ill-feeling towards any Deva. They therefore provided against this contingency by prescribing initiation in the Mantras of all the five Devatās, so that no one might think that because he was a Śākta, Viṣṇu was not a Devatā for his worship, and that consequently it was not necessary for him to bear respect and devotion for Viṣṇu; or that because he was a Vaiṣṇava, Śakti was not a Devatā for his worship, and consequently it was useless for him to worship Śakti.

Tantrik Initiation

The moment a Brāhmaṇa is initiated in the Gāyatrī Mantra, he becomes fundamentally entitled to the five forms of worship. The speciality of Tāntrik initiation is that it matures this title to the point of bearing fruit.[3] Tāntrik initiation indicates the sprouting state of that,[4] of which the seed is sown by initiation in the Gāyatrī. Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa has therefore said to Uddhava, the crest-gem of devotees, in the Śrīmad Bhāgavata:[5]

"In all parvas[6] during the year one should perform my Yātrā[7] and Bali,[8] and should take both Tāntrik and Vaidik initiation, and observe Vrata[9] in my name."

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[1] That is, between one Devatā and another in the knowledge that all are one.

[2] Tāntrik doctrine.

[3] A person may be qualified to do a thing, but it does not follow that without further aid he can accomplish it; and this aid the Tāntrik initiation supplies.

[4] Tattva.

[5] Eleventh Skandha.

[6] Specified occasions for religious observances.

[7] Festivals such as Dolyātrā, Rathayātrā, etc.

[8] Worship.

[9] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

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Again: "My worship is of three kinds—namely, Vaidik, Tāntrik, and mixed (Paurāṇik). I should, therefore, be worshipped according to the rules prescribed in the three Śāstras of Veda, Tantra, and Purāṇa."

In the Tantra Śāstra, Bhagavān Maheśvara also has laid down the same rule, drawing, however, a distinction between the ages.

In the Kubjikā Tantra it is said: "In the three Yugas of Satya, Treta, and Dvāpara, Devas should be worshipped according to rules prescribed in Śruti and Smṛti. In the Kali Yuga Devas should be worshipped only according to rules prescribed in the Tantra. In the Kali Yuga, Devas are not pleased with worship performed according to rules laid down in any other Śāstra."[1]

In another Tantra[2] this has been more clearly stated.

"Performance of Dharma[3] should follow the Vaidik method in the Satya Yuga, the method of Smṛti in the Treta Yuga, the Paurāṇik method in the Dvāpara Yuga, and the Tāntrik method in the Kali Yuga."

The following passage occurs in the Puraścaraṇa Rasollāsa: "In the Kali Yuga, in Bhāratavarṣa,[4] the Dhyāna[5] and Mantras prescribed in Tantra are proper. O Devī of restless glances, O fair-faced lady, the Dhyānas and Mantras prescribed in the Vedas, the Smṛtis, and the Purāṇas are never proper in Bhāratavarśa in the Kali Yuga."

In the Mahānirvāṇa Tantra it is said: "My beloved! In the Kali Yuga there is no other path but that path prescribed in Āgama.[6] O spouse of Śiva, it has already been stated by me in Śruti, Smṛti, Purāṇa, etc., that in the Kali Yuga the wise should worship Devas according to the rules prescribed in Āgama."[6]

"In the Kali Yuga the Mantras prescribed in Tantra are naturally efficacious,[7] speedily bear fruit, and are proper in Japa,

[1] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*
[2] Not stated, but a similar passage occurs in the Kulārṇava Tantra.
[3] Religious rites.
[4] India.
[5] Formulae of meditation (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[6] The Tantra.
[7] Siddha.

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Yajña,[1] and all other rites. The Mantras of the Veda were fruitful in Satya and other Yugas. In the Kali Yuga they are as impotent as venomless snakes, and are, as it were, dead. Just as the senses of figures pictured on a wall are without action, so in the Kali Yuga Mantras other than those prescribed in Tantra are unable to effect any result."

In the Dattātreya Yāmala we read: "Just as a person without a guardian has no protection in the world, so a person without initiation has no protection, whether in this world or the next."

In the Gautamīya Tantra it is said: "Just as the sons of the twiceborn[2] who have not received the sacred thread have no right to study the Veda and so forth, but acquire such right by investiture with the sacred thread, so the uninitiated twice-born have no right to recite[3] Mantras, worship Devas, and so forth, but acquire such right by initiation. For this reason, after investiture with the sacred thread, the twice-born should again purify themselves according to the Śāstra revealed by Śiva."[4]

The following is from the Kulārṇava Tantra: "Tapasyā,[4] observance of rules;[5] observance of Vrata,[4] pilgrimage to Tīrthas,[6] bodily restraint and other acts, are ineffectual if performed by one who is uninitiated. One should, therefore, by all means be initiated by a Guru."

In the Āgama Sandarbha it is said: "To take the Gāyatrī is the first initiation for the awakening of a knowledge of the Ātmā."

For this reason worship of the Gāyatrī should come first and worship of another (Iṣṭadevatā) according to Tāntrik initiation should follow. This is the proper Tattva[7] for the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣattriya, and Vaiśya castes — that is to say, after first taking initiation in the Gāyatrī by the Samskāra[8] of Upanayana,[9] one should be initiated according to Tantra in the Mantra of one's Iṣṭadevatā. For Śūdras, for whom there is no Samskāra of Upanayana, the Tāntrik initiation alone is prescribed. In

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1 See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.* 2 Members of the three superior castes.
3 Japa. 4 See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.* 5 Niyama.
6 Holy shrines. 7 Principle, doctrine, line of work.
8 "Sacrament" (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
9 Putting on of the sacred thread.

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the Kali Yuga initiation in the Gāyatrī, though originally Vaidik, is acceptable only in the form prescribed in the Tantra Śāstra.

The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra says: "This Sāvitrī,[1] who is Brahman, is as much Tāntrik as Vaidik—that is to say, is proper both in Vaidik and Tāntrik rites. O Devī! for this reason, when the Kali age is in strength, the twice-born are entitled to perform daily worship with the Gāyatrī Mantra alone of all Vaidik Mantras. But in the Kali age the Gāyatrī Mantra should be preceded by the Praṇava[2] in the case of Brāhmaṇas; by the Lakṣmī-bīja[3] in the case of Kṣattriyas; and by the Sarasvatī-bīja[4] in the case of Vaiśyas."

Besides this, the Vaidik Mantras which have been prescribed in Tāntrik rites such as the ten Samskāras and the like, have, in spite of their Vaidik origin, become Tāntrik owing to their having been repeated by Maheśvara and Maheśvarī in connection with the Tāntrik Method. For this reason, rites performed with those Mantras in the Kali Yuga will not be fruitless.

"O Devī, without Samskāras[5] the body is not purified, and therefore without them a person is not entitled to perform rites relating to Devas and Pitṛs.[6] Members of the Brāhmaṇa, and other castes who desire their welfare in this and next world, should, therefore, by all means, and with care, receive the Samskāras specified for their respective castes. Garbhādhāna, Pumsavana, Sīmantonnayana, Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Niṣkramaṇa, Annaprāśana, Chūdākaraṇa, Upanayana, and Vivāha[7]—these are the ten Samskāras prescribed in the Śāstra for Brāhmaṇas, Kṣattriyas, and Vaiśyas. Śūdras and people other than Śūdras—that is to say, the lowest classes of Śūdras—have no Upanayana; so that they have only nine Samskāras, the twice-born castes only having the full ten Samskāras. O fair Lady! these ten Samskāras and all other rites, daily, incidental,

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[1] Gāyatrī Mantra, as to which see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*
[2] That is, "Om". [3] That is, "Śrīng". [4] That is, "Aing".
[5] Sacraments (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[6] The forefathers (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[7] For a description of these various "sacraments," or Samskāras see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.*

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or done to gain some reward,[1] should be performed according to the mode laid down by Śambhu[2]—that is to say, according to the Tāntrik method.

"My beloved, as Brahmā, the revealer of the Vedas, I have already related the rules which should be followed in different rites. Mantras also have been indicated according to different castes, such as Brāhmaṇa and others, for all the Samskāras and other rites. O Kālikā,[3] in the Satya, Treta, and Dvāpara ages,[4] in those rites the Praṇava[5] should precede those Mantras. O Parameśvarī, in the Kali age men should perform those rites, using the Māyābīja[6] at the commencement of those Mantras by the command of Śaṅkara[7]—that is to say, according to the Tantra Śāstra. In Nigama, Āgama,[8] the Tantras (Gautama, Sanatkumāra, etc.), the Vedas, and the Samhitās,[8] I have laid down all Mantras. But in different ages they should be applied in different ways. O Mahāmāyā, I shall next speak of Garbhādhāna and other rites. Of those, hear first of all of the purification of the menses,[9] and next, in their order, of all the other rites."

From the above, Sādhakas will learn that initiation in the Gāyatri, although originally Vaidik, is Tāntrik in the Kali age.

Again: "In the Kali age men should by all means purify their Ātmā by practice of truth, and perform all the duties prescribed for their respective castes according to the mode prescribed by Myself—that is to say, according to the Tantra Śāstra. Dīkṣā,[10] Pūja,[11] Japa, Homa, Puraścaraṇa,[12] Tarpaṇa,[13] Vrata,[12] (Upanayana), Vivāha, Pumsavana, Sīmantonnayana, Jātakarma, Nāmakaraṇa, Cūḍākaraṇa,[14] Antyeṣṭhikriyā,[15] Śrāddhā of forefathers (Pitṛs), should all be performed according to the Tantra Śāstra. Śrāddhā[12] in Tīrthas, Vṛṣotsarga,[16] Śāradīya Utsava,[17]

[1] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.* [2] Śiva. [3] The Devī.
[4] See *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.* [5] That is, "Om".
[6] That is, "Hrīng". [7] Śiva. [8] See Introduction, *ante.*
[9] Ṛtusamskāra, which precedes Garbhādhāna Samskāra. [10] Initiation.
[11] External worship, consisting of the rites beginning with Āvaraṇapūja, and ending with the worship of the principal Deity.
[12] See Introduction, *ante.* [13] Offering, oblations.
[14] These are various Samskāras, or "Sacraments", described in *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra.* [15] Funeral rite. [16] Offering of bulls in Śrāddhas.
[17] The autumnal festival, Durgā Pūja.

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Yātrā,[1] Gṛhapraveśa,[2] the putting on of new clothes and the like, consecration[3] of tanks, wells, and the like; rites to be performed on particular Tithis,[4] such as Pratipāda,[5] beginning the construction of a house, the consecration of a house, the establishment of images of Devatās, duties to be performed by day or night on specific occasions[6] in particular seasons or months, or every year, and all other acts daily or incidental to be done or not done, should be governed by the rules prescribed by me. If through delusion or wickedness, any Jiva fails to perform these acts according to Tāntrik rules, he will be deprived of the fruits of all religious performances done by him, and will in the next world be born as a worm in dung. O Maheśvarī, should anyone in the Kali Yuga forsake my cult[7] and perform any rite according to another Śāstra, that rite will bear for him fruit contrary to that which he desires. In the Kali age initiation in a cult opposed to mine (prescribed in a Śāstra other than Tantra) will prove to be the destruction of the Sādhaka's life. Pūja performed by him will be fruitless, Homa performed by him will be as the pouring of Ghee into ashes.[8] He will incur the anger of Devas, and will be in danger at every step. O Ambikā, when the Kali age is ripe, should anyone who knows the command of the Śāstra issued from my mouth, perform any rite according to another Śāstra, such a one will be guilty of a great sin. And in particular, if anyone should perform the sacred thread ceremony,[9] or marriage, according to other methods than those prescribed by me, that man will remain in a terrible hell so long as the sun and moon endure. The performance of Upanayana according to rules laid down by any other Śāstra will be equivalent to the sin of killing a Brāhmaṇa.[10] And the boy who in such case wears the sacred thread will be fallen[11] and more degraded than a Caṇḍāla.[12] The thread, too, worn by

[1] The commencement of journey.
[2] The first entry into a house.
[3] Pratiṣṭha.
[4] Lunar days.
[5] The first day after the new moon or the full moon.
[6] Parva.
[7] Mata.
[8] It should be poured into fire.
[9] Upanayana.
[10] One of the six great sins. Upanayana is investiture with the sacred thread.
[11] Vrātya.
[12] One of the lowest castes.

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him round his neck will be without virtue.[1] A wife married according to the rites of another Śāstra will not be a legitimate wife, according to Dharma. O Devī, leader in Kula, the man who marries her will sin. By intercourse with her he will daily commit the sin of having intercourse with a prostitute. Devas and the Pitṛs will not accept food and water from his hand. For the food offered by him is like excrement, and the water offered by him is like pus. The child born of that man and woman will be a bastard,[2] excluded from all religious acts,[3] and deprived of the right to perform all rites[4] relating to Devas and Pitṛs, and to be a follower of Kula. Should the image of a Devatā be established by a method other than that ordained by Śambhu, then such Devatā will never appear in such image. The establishment of that image will, therefore, be useless as respects the next world, and will simply spell trouble and waste of money in this. Should anyone perform a Śrāddha according to a method other than that prescribed in Tantra, then that Śrāddha will be useless, and the person so performing it will go to hell with all his forefathers. Water offered by him will be like blood, and piṇḍa[5] offered by him will be like excrement. For this reason, man should by all means seek the shelter of the path prescribed by Śaṇkara. O Devī, what more need I say? Truly, truly, I say, any act performed according to any other method than that prescribed by Śambhu will prove of no avail. Not to speak of religious merit to be acquired in future, even that which has been acquired in the past will be destroyed. There is no escape from hell for one who follows not the practices ordained by Śambhu. O Maheśvarī, it is by the performance of daily and incidental religious acts according to the path described by me that a person performs your Sādhana. Of these, worship with your Mantra, Yantra, etc., form special Sādhana. I shall now speak of the great remedy for the disease brought about by the Kali age. Do Thou listen to it."

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1 That is, it will be a mere common piece of thread.
2 Kānīna: child born of an unmarried woman.
3 Dharma.
4 Tāntrik rites.
5 Balls of food offered in Śrāddha to the Pitṛs.

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Loss of Tantras and Treatises on this Scripture

From these commands of Bhagavān, who is the seat of the welfare of the three worlds, Sādhakas will also surmise what irremediable loss has been caused to the Āryan race through want of knowledge of, and practice according to, the Tantra Śāstra. A large number of treatises on the Tantra Śāstra are required for the proper performance of these religious rites and duties, and it is inevitable that there should be a longing in the hearts of Sādhakas to collect such treatises for the purpose of meeting this requirement.

What, however, is lamentable in this respect, is that the store of medicines has been burnt before the appearance of the disease. The mountain-heap of religious treatises has been almost consumed at the very beginning of the Kali age in the powerful destructive fire of religious revolution. Later on in this book we shall not have the opportunity to mention the names of the treatises of which we have information from original books and compilations on Tantra, and which formed a part of the mass of treatises which has now been almost destroyed. For this reason, before we proceed to deal with the subject of Mantra-tattva,[1] we shall state here, for the information of Sādhakas in connection with the present subject, the names of a few such treatises. From these they will be able to see that when compared with the mass of other treatises on Śāstra,[2] they from such an insignificant mass that they are lost in the vast womb of the untraversable sea of Tantra so full of deep truths.

Kālīvilāsa	Mahānirvāṇa	Bhūtadāmara
Kamkālamālinī	Mālinīvijaya	Vīrabhadra
Muṇḍamālā	Mahānīla	Bījacintāmaṇi
Mahiṣamardinī	Mahākālasamhitā	Ekajaṭā
Māyātantra	Pherutantra	Nirvāṇatantra
Mātṛkābheda	Bhairavatantra	Tripurāsāra
Mātṛkodaya	Bhairavītantra	Viśvasāra

[1] The principle of Mantras.

[2] Apparently Tantra Śāstra, in which case the sense is that the treatises which the author enumerates form but an insignificant part of the vast mass of Tāntrik books which are not found or enumerated.

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Varadātantra
Vāsudevarahasya
Vārāhītantra
Vṛhadgautamīya
Varṇoddhṛtitantra
Viṣṇuyāmala
Vṛhannīla
Vṛhadyoni
Viṣṇurahasya
Vāmakeśvara
Brahmajñānatantra
Brahmayāmala
Advaitatantra
Varṇavilāsa
Phetkāriṇī
Puraścaraṇarasollāsa
Puraścaraṇacandrikā
Picchilātantra
Prapañcasāra
Hamsa
Parameśvaratantra
Navaratneśvara
Nityatantra
Nīlatantra
Nārāyaṇāyaka
Niruttara
Nāradīya
Nāgādina
Dakṣiṇāmūrtisamhitā
Yakṣiṇītantra
Yoginītantra
Yonitantra
Yogasāra
Yogārṇava
Yoginīhṛdaya
Yogasvarodaya
Ākāśabhairava
Rājarājeśvarī
Rādhātantra
Revatītantra
Rudrayāmala
Rāmārcanacandrikā
Śāvaratantra
Indrajālatantra
Kālītantra
Kāmākhyātantra
Kāmadhenutantra
Kālīkulasarvasva
Kumārītantra
Kṛkalāsadīpikā
Kālottara
Kubjikātantra
Kuloḍḍīśa-Kulārṇava
Kulamūlāvatāra
Kulaśūtra
Yakṣaḍāmara
Sarasvatītantra
Śāradātantra
Śaktisaṅgama
Śaktikāgamasarvasva
Urddhāmnāya
Svatantratantra
Sammohanatantra
Cīnācāra
Toḍalatantra
Buddhatantra
Ekavīrātantra
Nigamakalpadruma
Nigama-kalpalatā
Nigamasāra
Śyāmārahasya
Tārārahasya
Skandayāmala
Annadākalpa
Annapūrṇākalpa
Āgamakalpadruma
Āgamatattvavilāsa
Āgamādvaitanirṇaya
Āgamasandarbha
Āgamasāra
Ādityahṛdaya
Uttarakāmākhyā
Uttaratantra
Utpattitantra
Umāyāmala
Ekavīrākalpa
Kamalātantra
Kamalāvilāsa
Kātyāyanītantra
Kālikārcanacandrikā
Kālīkalpa
Kālīkulasadbhāva
Kālīkulāmṛta
Kālīkulārṇava
Kālīkrama
Kālīhṛdaya
Kumārīkalpa
Kulacūḍāmaṇi
Kulaprakāśa
Kulasāra
Kulasundara
Kulācāra
Kulārṇava
Kṛṣṇārcanacandrikā
Kaulārcanadīpikā
Kaulāvalī
Kramacandrikā
Kramadīpikā
Kṛyāyogasāra
Kṛyasāra
Gaṇeśavimarśiṇi
Gandharvatantra
Gāyatrītantra
Guptadīkṣā
Guptasādhanā
Guptārṇava
Gurutantra
Gūḍhārthadīpikā
Gautamīyatantra
Gaurīyāmala
Gheraṇḍasamhitā
Cakravicāra
Cīnatantra
Yāmala
Jñānatantra
Jñānārṇava

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Dāmara
Tantrakaumudī
Tantracūḍāmaṇi
Tantradīpikā
Tantrapramoda
Tantraratna
Tantrarāja
Tantrasāgarasamhitā
Tantrasāra
Tantrādarśa
Tāntrikadarpaṇa
Tārākhāṇḍa
Tārānigama
Tārātantra
Tārāpradīpa
Tārābhaktisudhārṇava
Tārāṇava
Tārāsāra
Tripurākalpa
Tripurārṇava
Tripurāsārasamucchata
Trailokyasammohana
Dakṣiṇāmūrtikalpa
Dattātreyayāmala
Durgākalpa
Devīyāmala
Devyāgama
Nandikeśvarasamhitā
Nāradapañcarātra
Nārāyaṇītantra
Nigamakalpasāra
Nigamatattvasāra
Nibandhatantra
Nṛsimhakalpa
Paramahamsapaṭala
Paradevīrahasya
Puraścaraṇabodhinī
Pūjāsāra
Prapañcasāra
Prayogasāra
Vālāvilāsa
Brahmayāmala
Brahmāṇḍatantra
Bhagavadbhaktivilāsa
Bhavacūḍamaṇi
Bhīmaparākrama
Bhuvaneśvarītantra
Bhuvaneśvarīpārijāta
Bhūtaśuddhitantra
Bhairavakośa
Bhairavayāmala
Bhairavasamhitā
Matsyasūkta
Mantratantraprakāśa
Mantradarpaṇa
Mantramahodadhi
Mantramuktāvalī
Mantraratna
Mantraratnāvalī
Mahākapilapañcarātra
Mahākālamohinītantra
Mahānīlatantra
Mahāliṅgeśvaratantra
Mānasollāsa
Mālinītantra
Mṛḍāṇītantra
Merutantra
Yogacintāmaṇi
Revātantra
Lakṣasāgara
Lakṣmīkulārṇava
Liṅgārcana
Varṇabhairava
Vāmadevatantra
Vāyavīyatantra
Vārāhītantra
Vidyānandanibandha
Vidyotpattitantra
Vimalātantra
Vīratantra
Vṛhattantrasāra
Vṛhattoḍalātantra
Vṛhatśrīkramasangraha
Vṛhadrudrayāmala
Vṛhannirvāṇa
Vṛhanmāyātantra
Vehāyasīmantrakośa
Vyomakeśasamhitā
Vyomaratnatantra
Śaktiyāmala
Śaktitantra
Śambhusaṃhita
Śāktakrama
Śāktānandatarangiṇī
Śāmbhavītantra
Śāradātantra
Śarādatilaka
Śāśvatatantra
Śikhariṇtantra
Śivatāṇḍava
Śivadharma
Śivarahasya
Śivasangraha
Śaivaratna
Śaivāgama
Śyāmākalpalatā
Śyāmāpradīpa
Śyāmārcanacandrilā
Śyāmāsaparyākrama
Śyāmāsaparyāvidhi
Śrīkulārṇava
Śrītattvacintāmaṇi
Srīrāmasangraha
Sanatkumāratantra
Samayātantra
Samayācāratantra
Sammohanatantra
Sarasvatītantra
Sāracintāmaṇi
Sārasaṃraha
Sārasmucchaya
Svārasvatatantra
Simhavāhinītantra
Siddhalaharītantra
Siddhavidyādīpikā
Siddhāntasāra

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Siddheśvarītantra	Nigamatattvaratna	Pārvatītantra
Somaśambhu	Śivasūtra	Dāmarāsūtra
Sacchhandamaheśvara	Nityaprayogasāra	Ṣaṭkarmadīpikā
Hayaśīrṣapañcarātra	Nirvāṇasamhitā	Ṣaṭkarmadīdhiti
Haragaurisamvāda	Kāmarūpadīka	Cakreśvara
Uḍḍāmareśvara	Kāmeśvaratantra	Cakramukura
Kālikollāsa	Kāmākhyāprayoga	Kaulakṛtyatattva
Kulakalpalatā	Hanumatkalpa	Kṛtyatattva
Kāmākhyādarpaṇa	Vijayātantra	Kṛtyaprayoga
Kaumārīvilāsa	Pīṭharatnākara	Āgamārṇava
Caṇḍikārcanacandrikā	Kātyāyanikalpa	Abhicārakavaca
Cāmuṇḍātantra	Gaurītantra	Śyāmāsaparyā
Aghorabhairava	Mātangītantra	Siddhitantra
Bhairavānandasāra	Ṣoḍaśīsamhitā	

We have mentioned the above, in order to give an idea of a fraction only of the names of the treatises of which authoritative mention has been made in the way of ordinary research. Besides this, we hear from Tāntrik teachers[1] that the number of treatises on Tantra is one lakh,[2] and some say that it is even more. Moreover, a particularly trustworthy community holds that even now there is no cessation in the creation of Tantras, and that there will also be no such cessation in all the ages to come. Even now Bhagavān, Gaṇapathi Deva, at the command of his Father and Mother,[3] relates to Ṛṣis,[4] inhabiting the Himālayas any Tantra which he hears from them. Maharṣis,[5] and accomplished Sādhakas, the well-wishers of the three worlds, promulgate them therein through successive generations of disciples. As it is in this way that Tantras reach the earth, there can be nothing to wonder at if new Tantras daily appear in the world. Even to-day, in the discourse of the Father and the Mother of the three worlds[6] (the pair who are the Parabrahman), seated on a throne in the midst of the assemblage of Brahmā and other Devas in the bejewelled temple of Kailāsa, the Tantra Śastra,

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[1] Ācāryas.
[2] 1000,000.
[3] Śiva and Pārvatī.
[4] See the Gāyatrī Tantra, chap. iv.
[5] Great seers (see *Introduction to Tantra Śāstra*).
[6] The Tantras are written in the form of a discussion between Śiva and His spouse Pārvatī.

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